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AN EPISODE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

THE SECTARIES OF NUREMBERG 1524–1528

BY

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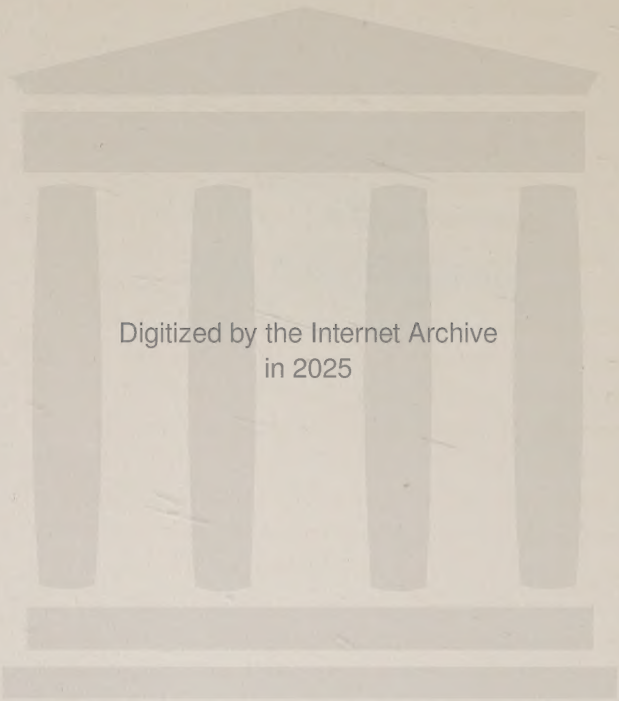
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PREFACE

THE subject of religious tolerance or intolerance may seem to some of antiquarian rather than of immediate and practical interest. In modern civilization men and women are no longer hanged, drowned, or burned because of the peculiarities of their religious belief or lack thereof. But in the longer view religious intolerance is but a phase of the world-old struggle between those who would impose by force their own or the community's will and those who believe that man should be true to his own conscience. In all ages intolerant men have been in the majority. When they wish to compel the minority to worship at their shrines they invoke the gods which by them are held most dear — whether of church, of state, or of some social or economic system.

Intolerance, some maintain, is but one aspect of the inevitable struggle for existence and the notion of tolerance is therefore a chimeric dream. There can be no tolerance, they claim, but that of indifference; men will and must fight for the things they truly cherish, employing any means which may, in their judgment, achieve the end they seek. Are we to accept this dictum of the determinist? I cannot so believe. If man is a wholly irrational being, yes; but if his actions may be at least in part controlled by reason there seems good hope

that even in the struggle he may recognize and respect the differing viewpoints of his fellows. This does not mean that one may have no convictions; it implies merely that, clinging to his own, he should be willing to permit others likewise to hold theirs. If tolerance be anything at all it is not an inborn response of the animal, it is a temper born of the rational in man.

The present essay was written in 1915 but was then set aside in the hope that opportunity might be found to search the archives of Nuremberg and Bamberg to make absolutely certain that no significant material lay still buried in those repositories. Conditions during the past few years have made this impossible. The riches of these archives have, however, been laid bare through the researches of workers in allied fields — notably by Wappler, Nicoladoni, Kolde and Schornbaum. The work of these scholars, especially in the publication of documentary materials, has been of such quality and fullness that there seems no valid reason for longer delaying the publication of this study. The theme of the study is the development among the Lutherans of a theory of persecution, and more especially the influence which the presence of a group of sectaries in Nuremberg had in shaping a policy of repression of dissent in Lutheran lands, between the years 1524 and 1528. In addition some light is thrown upon the importance of the sectaries of the Reformation for the growth of religious tolerance. In the belief that the most fruitful work

may be performed through the intensive cultivation of a narrow field the study has been closely limited both in space and time. But it is not without significance for the story as a whole, since the situation in Nuremberg was fairly typical of what was going on throughout much of Germany.

The significance of the problem was called to my attention and my interest therein aroused in the Seminar of Professor George L. Burr at Cornell University. My debt to him is great, how great any who have come under his leadership, and who read this study, will easily recognize. It is a pleasant duty here to record my debt to a great and inspiring guide, who gave himself unsparingly to his students, counting not the cost in the delay to his own work, that they might enjoy the fruits of his ripe scholarship and experience.

Others have read parts of the manuscript and have offered helpful suggestions. For such assistance I am especially indebted to Professor C. H. Hull of Cornell, who read and criticized with great care nearly the whole of it, and to Dr. Gottlieb Betz of Columbia, who went over portions of it from the standpoint of the German philologist. For painstaking and critical aid in the preparation of the manuscript and in the journey through the press grateful acknowledgment is due to my wife, Barbara Evans.

AUSTIN P. EVANS.

Montrose, New York,
22 April, 1924.

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An Episode in the Struggle for Religious Freedom

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION[1]

Intolerance is not peculiar to any particular place or time. It is not inherent in any single institution. It may be enshrined in a creed or in the denial of all creeds; it is found in religious or philosophic systems, or among men of science. It is a state of mind rather than the product of an institution or of a system. Tolerance, too, has never been entirely lacking. If it is today coming to be better understood and more highly prized than in some past ages, it is because the belief is growing that there may be more than one good way of looking at a question. This carries with it no impli-

[1] For these introductory pages there has been no attempt to examine carefully the source material. The books which have been found most helpful in obtaining this background for my work are the following: Acton, *Lectures on Modern History;* Beard, *The Reformation of the 16th Century in its Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge;* Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe;* More, *Utopia;* Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics;* Völker, *Toleranz und Intoleranz im Zeitalter der Reformation;* Wernle, *Renaissance des Christentums;* and by the same author, *Renaissance und Reformation.* Among magazine articles the one which proved especially helpful is Burr's *Anent the Middle Ages* (Am. Hist. Rev., vol. XVIII, pp. 710–726).

cation that one way may not be better than another, nor does it mean that the individual may have no real convictions. But whether it is argued that truth is absolute or that it is relative, there can scarcely be debate over the question that truth for the individual, or for the generation, is only as much of truth — absolute or relative — as that individual or that generation can grasp. The truth of one generation may become the falsehood of the next. Thus conceived, truth for the individual is a relative and a growing thing. It is for him to form his own convictions while respecting and even welcoming the differing views of others.

Intolerance always appeals to authority. During the Middle Ages it was the authority of a Church which with solicitous care watched over and guided man throughout his earthly life. As the representative of God it opened or closed for him the gates of Paradise, according as he followed in the paths appointed him by a divinely ordained clergy. The problem of primary interest for men of that age was their souls' salvation, and for this the Church was indispensable — *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. If the Church is the interpreter of God's truth to man and if there can be no salvation outside its portals, it follows that the clergy are in duty bound to protect the faithful under their care. They would be recreant to their trust should any serious breach of the discipline or dissent from the doctrine of the Church be allowed to pass unchal-

lenged. The Christian may fall into error on questions of faith and practice, but it is for the clergy to lead back the erring one into the paths of truth. If he refuses to be so led, if he stubbornly resists instruction and insists upon the propagation of false teaching, not only does he damn his own soul, but he endangers the souls of those with whom he comes in contact. All the powers of earth and heaven were marshalled in defense of the unity of the faith and the safety of the faithful. Should the heretic remain obdurate he might expect the extreme penalty of death. The spirit of the time demanded suppression of dissent.[2]

The duty and responsibility of the individual was relatively simple. All that was required of him was to accept unquestioningly the teaching of the Church. For one to oppose with his reason the judgment of the ages respecting the revealed will of God was deemed as preposterous then as now it seems absurd for one to question the workings of natural law or our notions of progress. For how could one hope, with his puny wit, to overthrow truth divinely established and authoritatively interpreted? Obedience was the cardinal

[2] This point becomes clearer when one reads the protests against the laxity of the clergy during the 12th century in the suppression of heresy. As in the case of lynchings in this country the mob resorted to rough and ready justice to protect themselves against the heretics when the clergy were slow or refused to proceed against them. *Cf.* Lea, *Inquisition in the Middle Ages,* Vol. I, pp. 218 *et sqq;* and Vacandard, *The Inquisition,* pp. 32 *et sqq.*

virtue; faith implicit the cardinal grace. Doubts, questionings, must be sternly repressed. For conscience the man of the Middle Ages had but little need. Questions of right and wrong were decided for him. It was for him to conform, to obey.[3]

A change in this point of view is observable as early as the thirteenth century. With the development of scholastic philosophy reason forged an excellent tool for the defense of faith, but it was among those very scholastic philosophers that the problem of the rights of the individual conscience was agitated, and the necessity of obedience to the dictates of that conscience affirmed.

The schoolmen were not arguing for a subjective norm, but it is not such a long step from their thought to the idea that the individual has a right and a duty to follow his conscience even though it may be in opposition to the dictates of external authority. Such a principle is capable of growth and during the succeeding generations, under the inspiration of an awakened and redirected intellect, it developed widely.[4]

[3] Obviously, such statements may be pushed too far. The seeming contrast between the attitude of the 12th and of the 20th century is after all not so great, except that the state has now usurped the position of the medieval Church, or shall one say their relative positions are reversed. Theoretically the state in its punitive measures now takes cognizance only of overt acts and does not enter the realm of thought or conscience, but in times of stress, such as war, the dividing line is very thinly drawn.

[4] On the growth of the claims of the individual conscience see Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 31 *et seq.*

It would be too long a story to trace in any detail the growth of this idea through the two succeeding centuries until it eventuated in a broader outlook and a wider tolerance in the later Renaissance period. The restless minds of the later medieval thinkers worked out a theory of " two-fold truth," whereby reason was given free play on all questions not concerned definitely with theology.[5] Inviting avenues of speculation were opened in which rein might be given to a reawakened curiosity. New discoveries widened the horizon of mankind and aroused a deeper interest in all things of this world; old theological cosmologies were shattered; and irresistibly thought began to lay hold on and question the very dogmas of the Church itself. Faith and reason were now supplanted by conscience and reason as a means of arriving at truth. And truth thus realized may frequently find itself at variance with *the truth,* preserved in the custody of an authoritative institution.

Forces were thus developing which would one day tax to the utmost the claims of authority, but as yet conscious revolt had not raised its head. Nicholas of Cusa might put forth his theory of a concord between all faiths, to be reached through discussion and without compulsion;[6] Thomas More might sigh for a state where all faiths were to be

[5] *Cf.* Owen, *Evenings with the Skeptics,* Vol. II, pp. 3–52.

[6] In the dialogue *De Pace seu Concordantia Fidei* (1453). *Cf.* Burr, pp. 710–713.

tolerated so long as each man held honest convictions and respected those of others;[7] Erasmus might pen satirical attacks against the foibles of the clergy and place in the hands of the layman a new edition of the New Testament, edited and interpreted with chatty, readable notes, in the hope that thus each individual might arrive at truth for himself.[8] But these men all remained within the Church. Nicholas of Cusa was an influential cardinal; More suffered martyrdom for the orthodox faith; Erasmus never broke from the Church into which he was at birth baptized. Such men wrote and talked with great freedom. The Church, secure in her position, could afford to be indulgent, and was, indeed, inclined to be so. There has probably never been a period of greater freedom within the Catholic communion. The works of More and Erasmus were widely read and, though there were angry murmurings from some narrow and over-zealous clerics, there seemed good reason to hope that the new ideas might modify existing forms, and that out of these years would come a broader view-point and a more perfect freedom for the individual to order his religious life in accordance with the dictates of his own reason and conscience. All hope of this was shattered when, on Allhallows eve, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his

[7] *Utopia,* esp. Bk. IX (1516).

[8] See his edition of the New Testament in Greek and the *Paraphrases.*

theses to the church door at Wittenberg, and thus inaugurated a movement which was to split Germany, and all western Christendom as well, into two politico-religious parties. Until recent years it has been commonly held by Protestants that the Lutheran revolt ushered in religious liberty. In a sense that may be true, but not as it is ordinarily understood.[9] The immediate effect was quite different. It was a time of bitterness and strife when sharp definition was called for. Men spoke and acted in the heat of passion, and there was little time or opportunity for sober thought or reflection. For the exercise of a spirit of tolerance there was small chance or inclination. The things upon which men differed were emphasized and the spirit of freedom was crushed. For, from an authoritarian point of view, Luther and his followers did but substitute the unimpeachable authority of a sacred book for the authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy which they repudiated.

This was not obvious at first. When Luther sounded the call to war upon the unquestioned abuses existing in the Church, abuses under which Germany had for long groaned, a responsive chord vibrated in the hearts of nearly all thoughtful, earnest Germans who were looking for some relief from papal exactions. His ninety-five theses were

[9] This question has been carefully discussed by Völker, and with even broader view and deeper insight by Troeltsch in his *Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt.*

immediately published in the tongue of the common man and swiftly scattered over Germany. Men of all classes welcomed them and praised the Wittenberg friar who dared voice so boldly what was in the heart of every true German. And when he was pushed step by step, from mere attack upon ecclesiastical abuses which were recognized by all, to a denial of the infallibility of pope and council, and finally in December of 1520 to a definite break with the Church, the majority still followed him. For that break was preceded by the publication of three great pamphlets, the platform of the Lutheran revolution.[10] In these Luther, with bold strokes, painted the sins of the Roman Church and called upon the German nobility to sweep away ecclesiastical abuses; he cut the foundation from under the hierarchical edifice reared with painstaking care during the past millennium; he rendered unnecessary the office of prelate and priest by his theories of the priesthood of all believers and of justification by faith alone; and he laid, or seemed to lay, a foundation for freedom of conscience by his denial of external authority in matters of faith, and his insistence upon the competence of the individual to read and understand God's truth as revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Sacred Book. The papal bull of excommunication, followed by

[10] These were the well-known pamphlets — *Address to the Nobility of the German Nation; Concerning Christian Liberty;* and *On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church.*

the burning of that bull on a December morning of the year 1520, gave pause to some. Friar Martin was perhaps a little too aggressive in his methods. But when he stood before the Emperor and the estates of the realm gathered at the Diet of Worms, and professed himself taken captive in his conscience by the Word of God, insisting that he could not retract unless proved in error by texts from Scripture or by right reason, Germany rang with the praise of this doughty champion of the rights of conscience as bounded only by that Word of God. It seemed to men at the time, and indeed some have never been able to rid themselves of the notion, that Luther was here championing the rights of conscience for every individual.

Nothing could have been further from Luther's thinking. Heresy to him was still the deadliest of sins. He had discovered, to his own satisfaction, that the papal system as it existed in the sixteenth century was built upon a growth of tradition for which he could find no authority in the Bible and upon a series of forged documents. All this must, then, be discarded; Christian belief and Christian practice must conform to that of the early centuries after Christ. Implicit trust must be placed in the Sacred Book and there must be no deviation from its precepts.

Luther was sure that he had come to a true understanding of this Book, and at first there was no doubt in his mind that every other honest man

would understand it just as he had. But disillusionment was soon to come. Before 1521 was over he found that there were those who disagreed with him and clung stubbornly to their own beliefs. By 1525, thoroughly convinced that men could not be left to interpret the Bible for themselves, and recognizing that some power strong enough to enforce its will was indispensable if the gains which had been made were to be conserved, he turned to the only efficient power in the empire — to the territorial princes. In the summer of the following year, that union of Luther with the princes was given expression in the famous clause of the Recess of the Diet of Spires. Until the holding of a council, in the matters pertaining to the Edict of Worms, the ruler of each state was to "so live, rule and conduct himself as he hoped to answer to God and his imperial majesty."[11] Men had hoped to see in the movement inaugurated by Luther the effective assertion of the right of the individual conscience to be heard in matters of faith. To these was now given the choice between two institutions equally dominated by external authority — the one the authority of a visible Church, enforced by a powerful ecclesiastical hierarchy, the other the authority of a Book, enforced by the rulers of territorial states.

This development of the Evangelical movement

[11] Fourth article of the Recess. Pub. in Lünig, *Das teutsche Reichs-Archiv,* Vol. II, p. 461.

from a propaganda to an institution, with definite form and determined shibboleths, carried with it the beginnings of a revolt from all constituted ecclesiastical authority. It seemed of little use to break from one authoritarian form of religion merely to adopt another, and thus many returned to the Catholic faith or found themselves in opposition to all organized religion. Among those who returned were such men as Conrad Mut, who had for so long been the head of a circle of humanists in central Germany; Crotus Rubeanus, who had enthusiastically supported Luther during the first years of his revolt; and Wilibald Pirkheimer, patrician and man of letters at Nuremberg. The radical opponents numbered a host of men who, during the next few years, were to be found, singly or in groups, in nearly every town or city in Germany — the " Ultras of the Reformation."

It is not germane to this study to attempt to trace carefully the origin or the spread of this radical movement. Much has already been done in this field, and while there is still more to do, any further contribution must come from a careful searching of the archives. Though the work which has already been done is in many cases of a very high quality, it has all too often been marred by a tendency toward partisan bias. Students have usually been the champions of one or another of the established forms of religion, they have been blinded by the term " Anabaptist " and the opprobrium

which connected itself with that name, and they have failed frequently to see the broader aspects of this movement. Those who make a hero of Luther see in the "Anabaptists" only a contentious, seditious body who did all in their power to rob his work of its effectiveness; those who hate him see in them the natural outcome of his propaganda and use them as an illustration of the evil results consequent upon the break with the Roman Church.[12]

Attempts to analyze and classify the various shades of opinion existing among those who during these years severed themselves from the authoritative churches have, in my opinion, met with but

[12] From the time that Urbanus Rhegius published (September 6, 1527) his warning against the "Anabaptists" to the present day, they have been the subject of adulation or vituperation. Some there are, however, who have attempted to write their history and evaluate their significance without bias. Most notable among early writers is Sebastian Franck, who included in his *Geschichtsbibel* (1531) a fair-minded account of them. Of recent books may be mentioned the little monograph by Henry S. Burrage, *A History of the Anabaptists in Switzerland;* the interpretative work of Karl Hagen, *Deutschlands literarische und religiöse Verhältnisse im Reformationszeitalter;* and the careful studies on Sebastian Franck by A. Hegler, particularly his *Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck.* Very excellent work has been done by Wappler in the archives of central Germany. He has, during the last few years, given to the world the fruits of his researches in a series of monographs, the last and most ambitious of which is his *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526–1584.* Troeltsch has shown their significance in the whole development of religious thought, more especially in its social aspects, in his *Sociallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen.* In his *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries* and in his *Studies in Mystical Religion* Rufus M. Jones treats interestingly and sympathetically of these sectaries.

slight success. On the extreme left there have ever existed men and women with all sorts of schemes and a variety of methods for bringing about immediate and salutary reforms. And so it was in the case of these sectaries. To return to apostolic simplicity in religious life and organization was their ideal. The majority of them asked only that they might be allowed to worship God in their own way. With the state and with organized religion they had no quarrel, were they but permitted to live and work quietly. But there were among them a certain number who put forth fantastic ideas and voiced fanatical principles destructive alike — so thought authority at that time — of all ordered religion and civic peace. These men were the ones who were most in evidence and from them their contemporaries, especially those responsible for law and order, received their impression of the whole movement. As a result all sectaries were to be abhorred and all apostacy was to be rooted out.

The name "Anabaptists," by which they came to be known, is entirely fortuitous and has created the false impression that they possessed definite organization and fixed tenets. Such a conclusion, for the period covered by this study at least, is wholly unjustifiable. There were certain beliefs which practically all held in common, but the points on which they differed were far more numerous than those on which they were agreed. The name was given them by their foes. When it was thought to

be necessary to take active measures to suppress dissent, authority began to look about for means of repression. An instrument was found ready at hand.

It was observed that one point upon which a large number were agreed was that infant baptism was useless. Baptism, they held, should mark the adult's conscious acceptance of the Christian life and should be the sign of his union with the Christian brotherhood. In accordance with prevailing faith and custom they had all been baptized at birth. Adult baptism, therefore constituted rebaptism. Under Roman imperial law one who rebaptized was subject to severe penalties.[13] This old law proved a convenient weapon to employ against them. It was revived, and as "Anabaptists" they were summarily punished. They repudiated the name, insisting that infant baptism did not constitute true baptism and that they were not in reality rebaptizers.[14] Their argument was of no avail. The name was so conveniently elastic that it came to be applied to all those who stood

[13] *Cod. Justin. Lib. I, Tit. VI*$_2$. Si quis rebaptizare quempiam de mysteriis catholicae sectae fuerit detectus una cum eo, qui piaculare crimen commisit (si tamen criminis per aetatem capax sit, cui persuasum sit) ultimo supplicio percellatur. Law of Honorius and Theodosius, 413 A.D. *Cf. Cod. Theodosianus, Lib. XXI, Tit. VI*$_6$, where the wording is somewhat different.

[14] See a little pamphlet, attributed to Langenmantel, entitled, "*Ein Göttlich und grundtlich offenbarung von den warhafftigen widerteuffern: mit Göttlicher warheit angezaigt.*" *Cf.* Jones, *Studies in Mystical Religion*, p. 369, note.

out against authoritative state religion. As "Anabaptists" they have been known to this day.

It is difficult to come to know these humble folk. The world has given them but scant notice. Their writings are mostly lost; and one has to glean from chance admissions of their enemies, from their statements at trials, frequently wrung from them under torture, and from the few bits which remain from the pens of their friends, what manner of men they really were. For the most part, with the exception of some of their leaders, they were artisan folk, men and women who had become dissatisfied with the Church as it then existed and who had no theological system to uphold. Nor did their revolt confine itself wholly to religious beliefs; it carried with it a program of social reform as well. The movement arose first and became strongest in the Swiss cantons and in the cities of Upper Germany. And it was no accident that it began there. Trained in a love of freedom and in some measure of self-government, people had there become accustomed to face problems independently. And when, as a result of a combination of forces — the printing press, humanism, the Evangelical movement — the Bible was placed in their hands, they were prepared to read and interpret it in their own way. There they found justification neither for the claims of the old Church nor for the system that was just then being built up and becoming fixed in Evangelical lands. To conserve the results attained by the

revolt from the Church hierarchy the great leaders shrank from taking what seemed to these less responsible groups the final step. Why, then, should they follow such leaders? Must they not rather follow the dictates of their own consciences? Luther had said that a man under the guidance of the Holy Spirit was competent to interpret Scripture for himself and form his own judgment; the humanists had taught them to use their reason; Zwingli had said that all good men of all the ages, whether or not they had ever heard of Christ and the Bible, would be saved. The words of these men they accepted literally. They read and interpreted the Bible by the light of their own reason. If Zwingli was right, then God must speak directly to the human heart, there must be an inner Word supplementing the written Word. Indeed, it is this inner Word, this prompting of the Holy Spirit within, that makes it possible for one to understand the written Word.

But if God speaks directly to the individual through this voice within him and through Holy Writ, what is the need of external authority, or of a visible church? The true church consists only of those who consciously accept the will of God as the guiding principle for their lives. Wherever two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, there will He be and there is His church. The ritual of worship, the miraculous in the sacraments, all these are empty, useless forms. They

are to be discarded except in the case of two or three of the sacraments, which are to be retained as symbols of union with Christ. Baptism is the seal placed upon the conscious entrance of the individual into the brotherhood of Christ, the sign of the putting away of sin and the assumption of the life of holiness. Infant baptism is not commanded in the Bible, nor is it in accord with the teachings therein found, for a child neither has sinned nor can it consciously choose the Christian life. Infant baptism is, therefore, worthless. Likewise the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is merely a symbol, useful as a memorial of the life and death of the Master, but of value only to the man who has experienced the inner renewing of the spirit. There is no miraculous property in the bread and wine.

Apostolic simplicity is the goal at which all Christians should aim. As brotherly love and a spirit of common helpfulness then reigned, so must it now reign among the followers of Christ. As Christ said, " Whosoever would be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all," so the Christian needs no magistrate, cannot himself be raised above his fellows. Men should be ruled by the precepts of the Bible, and one so ruled will do voluntarily much more than is required of him by any civil authority. This does not necessarily imply hostility to the civil power, it means rather

that those who put on the life of Christ are to live under a higher law. Let your speech be yea, yea, and nay, nay, said the Master; therefore one may not take oaths. Love shall reign among you; all war, then, must cease. One may not carry the sword. As Christ taught that his followers should keep themselves apart from the world, so the Christian must now keep himself from the world — and in the extreme form this meant that there must be no commerce with "unbelievers" and no intermarriage.[15]

It would not be a difficult task to find parallel statements which could be isolated from their context, both from orthodox medieval writers and from the leaders of the Evangelical revolt as well. Their objectionable character when thus put forth by unauthorized groups lay in the fact that all such principles are capable of great exaggeration by overzealous and fanatical teachers, and in many cases there occurred serious excesses which condemned the whole radical movement in the eyes of all lovers of good order and established authority. It is the blessing and the curse of the philosophy of individualism that it throws men back upon themselves and their own spiritual resources, and forces them to think and to choose for themselves. In the term individualism, as applied to the revolt of the individual from a religion of authority, this is

[15] These general principles are well summarized in Keller, *Geschichte der Wiedertäufer,* Chapter II.

equally true.[16] Thus one finds every shade of opinion among these sectaries. For some, who had not yet learned to see the essence of the spiritual life apart from the visual garb in which it was clothed, denial of the outward forms of religion was capable of slipping easily into a rejection of Christianity itself. The refusal to accept office, the denial of oaths, the theory of the superfluousness of the civil authority for the Christian, could easily degenerate into a repudiation of the whole existing political system; the belief in the aloofness of the Christian community was capable of leading to grave offenses against the social order.

In the view of the exponents of authority in Church and State the more extreme radical position seemed predominant. They saw only the spectacular. It seemed much more simple — and more safe — to suppress than to seek to understand and meet dissent by reason. Any one who could not repeat the shibboleths of established faith became thereby anathema — an enemy of all law and order. Such an one must be put where he could not spread his poison throughout the whole body ecclesiastic and politic.

[16] It should be pointed out that many, perhaps the majority, of these sectaries were by no means thorough-going individualists. In fact in their social theories they tended rather toward communism. But they stood for the right of the individual in questions of religious faith, and some there were who developed a consistent philosophy of individualism, e.g., Sebastian Franck.

It is upon the shoulders of moderate men that great ideas and principles are frequently borne aloft to the light of day. Those who refuse to unite with one or the other group which may be striving for mastery, who persist in going their own way, are very apt to find themselves cordially hated and looked upon as traitors by both. But by quietly and persistently striving toward an ideal they spread their leaven throughout a community even while that community is focusing its eyes upon the more spectacular phenomena. It is in such light that these radicals of the period of the Reformation should be viewed if one is to arrive at a true understanding of their significance. Though at times some of their number were guilty of grave excesses, though they were hounded by Catholic and Evangelical alike, until bitter persecution drove them into the orgy at Münster, they none the less carried with them ideas pregnant with meaning for the future. Whether for good or ill they were the humble champions in the sixteenth century of the rights of the individual conscience.

Chapter II

BEGINNINGS OF DISSENT IN NUREMBERG

In the heart of Germany on the Pegnitz, a small river tributary to the Main, lies the city of Nuremberg. Time has not succeeded in divesting it of much of its medieval charm, though the exigencies of an active commercial life have forced its growth far beyond the confines of its ancient walls. It is still dominated by its two great Gothic churches, St. Lorenz and St. Sebald, situated on either side of the river; parts of the walls and the old moat remain; while narrow, crooked streets, flanked by houses with high peaked roofs, the homes of wealthy burghers of a bygone day, aid in maintaining its medieval character.

At present it is one of the commercial centers of southern Germany, and in the later Middle Ages, in the height of its prosperity, it played relatively an even more important part. At that time a free imperial town, it lay on the direct route of trade from the commercial towns of Italy to the cities of the Hanseatic League, and thus became an important distributing center for the merchandise of the East. In manufacture, too, Nuremberg was important; the fame of its wares was widespread, the wealth of its citizens proverbial. The

period of its greatest glory was the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, before the new water routes to the East robbed the Italian towns of their monopoly of eastern trade. This, too, was a period of significant intellectual and artistic activity. In art one needs but mention the names of Albrecht Dürer, Adam Kraft, Veit Stoss, and Peter Vischer, all of whom did so much to beautify their city and to enhance its fame abroad; intellectually it was the center of an active humanistic group of which mention will be made later.

Radical movements generally have their beginnings in populous centers. There men of differing viewpoints meet and there the old, the traditional, is continually subjected to the dissolving influences of new currents of thought. There, too, in the busy hum of trade, criticism of the existing order tends to remain submerged and maintain itself until grown too strong to be easily eradicated. So it was in the towns that the individualistic movement of the Reformation arose and won most followers.

To this rule Nuremberg formed no exception. Played upon by many cross-currents of life and of thought, visited by merchants and travellers from distant lands, a favorite meeting-place of imperial diets bringing in their train men from scattered regions — it is quite understandable that within its walls the mystic and the dreamer found food for reflection. In the centuries just preceding the Reformation traces of dissent from the established

Church were to be found within its confines.[1] The Waldensians, the Friends of God, and finally the Hussites found followers among the citizens.[2] Hus, as we learn from a letter written by him to his friends at Prague, stopped there when on his fateful journey to the Council of Constance.[3] On that occasion opportunity was granted him for public discussion of his doctrines and he thus succeeded in winning many friends among the people. This spirit of independence of ecclesiastical control was further manifested in the initiative exercised by the Council in the appointment of pastors and the oversight over morals in churches and monasteries. It claimed for itself the function of instituting reforms when necessary, and for this reason its members were embroiled in continual disputes with their rightful ecclesiastical superior, the Bishop of Bamberg.[4] As in many another city of Germany a spirit of revolt against the Church was being fanned into life.

The influence of humanistic culture in Nuremberg has, however, more importance for this study than the presence of humble members of heretical sects. Humanism was carried across the Alps from Italy and found its way into the city about the

[1] Hagen, *Deutschlands religiöse und literarische Verhältnisse,* vol. I, p. 177.

[2] Haupt, *Die religiösen Sekten in Franken vor der Reformation.* See esp. pp. 18 *et sqq.*, 27, 37 *et seq.*

[3] Published in part by Hagen, I, p. 178, note. *Cf.* also Haupt, p. 31.

[4] Hagen, I, pp. 178 *et seq.*

middle of the fifteenth century. At the beginning of the following century it blossomed forth in great vigor under the leadership of Wilibald Pirkheimer.[5] The connection between humanism, with its emphasis upon the individual reason, and the sectaries of the Reformation period, with their insistence upon the duty of the individual to choose for himself in matters of faith, was very close. An interesting illustration of this is to be found in Erasmus where he expressed the wish that the Bible might be read widely in the vernacular and that men and women might ponder its teachings as they went about their daily tasks.[6] This wish, shared by practically all German humanists, was destined soon to be fulfilled.[7] Though bitterly denied in after days by the humanists, the spiritual relationship between humanism and the tendencies toward dissent from religious authority must not be overlooked.[8]

At the beginning of Luther's revolt the sym-

[5] Hagen, I, pp. 179–196.

[6] Erasmus, *Introduction to the Paraphrase of Matthew,* and the Preface to the *New Testament* (editions of 1516, 1519 and 1522). *Cf.* Rembert, *Die Wiedertäufer im Herzogtum Jülich,* pp. 24 *et sqq.*

[7] See Rembert, pp. 22–23, for details illustrating the influence of Erasmus upon the sectaries. This influence is recognized by Köhler in his *Reformation und Ketzerprozess,* p. 43.

[8] It is interesting to note in this connection that Denck was banished from Nuremberg by the Council, in which sat prominent members of the humanistic circle, because he trusted to his own reason and would not be instructed by orthodox divines. And Pirkheimer became one of his bitterest foes!

pathies of the Nuremberg circle of humanists were immediately and actively enlisted on the side of the Wittenberg friar. Christoph Scheurl — jurist and man of letters, second only to Pirkheimer in influence — it was who introduced Luther to John Eck; Kaspar Nützel translated the ninety-five theses into German, to be scattered far and wide over the country and read by all;[9] Wenceslaus Link accompanied Luther to Augsburg when he journeyed thither to meet the cardinal, Cajetan, who had been sent to Germany to silence the bold professor. His Nuremberg friends were inclined, however, to moderate the zeal of Luther and strongly urged him to come to some understanding with the papal party, especially when the moderate Miltitz was sent in 1519 to arrange a compromise with him. The fact that their advice went unheeded did not then lessen their enthusiasm for his cause and when in 1520 the bull threatening him with excommunication was promulgated the names of Lazarus Spengler and Wilibald Pirkheimer appeared among those of the friends who were to share his condemnation.

The course upon which Luther subsequently embarked, however, cooled the ardor of some of his Nuremberg friends. This is notably true in the case of Scheurl and Pirkheimer, both of whom re-

[9] *Christoph Scheurls Briefbuch,* ed. Soden and Knaake, p. 43. *Cf.* also Reicke, *Geschichte der Reichsstadt Nürnberg,* pp. 748 *et sqq.*

mained within the Church.[10] But the majority went with him; and in this group were the men who were to have the deciding voice in the conduct of religious affairs in the city during the next few crucial years. There was Lazarus Spengler, secretary to the Council and a leader in the definite action taken by that body in 1524 and 1525 to abolish Catholic worship. With him were Hieronymus Ebner and Kaspar Nützel, the former president of the Council after 1524, both most influential members of that body. Their influence was exerted wholly on the side of Evangelical reform. Wenceslaus Link also remained a close personal friend of Luther and a staunch supporter of his movement. Like Luther he was a member of the Augustinian Order. He had been Prior of the Convent at Wittenberg and in 1520 followed Staupitz as Vicar of the German Congregation. In 1523 he was appointed by Frederick, Elector of Saxony, as Evangelical pastor at Altenburg, and two years later he returned again to Nuremberg to accept the appointment to the pastorate of the New Spital, one of the large churches of the city.

With the above names should be mentioned other leaders of revolt in Nuremberg. Andreas Osiander,

[10] R. Hagen in his *Wilibald Pirkheimer,* pp. 147 *et seq.,* quotes an interesting letter of Pirkheimer's written in 1528. In this he explained his position in the religious controversy, maintaining that his attitude toward reform had remained constant, but that Luther had changed.

active, able, but narrow and domineering, was preacher at the church of St. Lorenz. His energy, fearlessness, directness and combativeness quickly won him a position of leadership. Others of the same group were Dominicus Schleupner, pastor at St. Sebald, Klemens Volkamer, and Christoph Kress, the latter two members of the Council and employed frequently on diplomatic missions.

No city in Germany accepted the leadership of Luther more whole-heartedly or carried through Evangelical reform more rapidly and thoroughly. In their zeal the Nurembergers even surpassed their leader in fearless acceptance of the new conditions imposed by the break with Rome. In open defiance of the claims urged by the papal legates at the diets held at Nuremberg, 1522–24, the ministers persisted in their Evangelical teaching and in abolishing Catholic forms of worship. With their propaganda the Council was secretly in accord, though promptings of expediency moved it to comply, albeit rather tardily, with the terms of the imperial mandate ordering the destruction of Luther's writings. During the year 1524 and the spring of 1525 the final steps in the break with Rome were pushed through despite every effort put forth by the Bishop of Bamberg to retain control over that portion of his diocese.[11]

[11] The documents for this may be found in Strobel, *Miscellaneen,* Bk. III, pt. II. See also the letters of Planitz to the Elector of Saxony in his *Berichte aus dem Reichsregiment in*

So great was the contention between the Catholic and Evangelical parties and so serious the need for some settlement whereby peace and uniformity of worship might be restored, that the Council ordered a conference to be held in March of 1525, at which the opposing claims of both might be heard and decided. The result of such a meeting could scarcely be in doubt. On 14 March the Council declared the Evangelical party, championed by Osiander, entirely victorious. Evangelical pastors were appointed for the monasteries, the inmates of which were now free to leave if they chose, indeed in some cases were forced to leave. The administration of ecclesiastical property and revenues was provided for by the Council. Upon the advice of the theologians that body assumed supreme control over religious affairs. The Lutheran reformation in Nuremberg was complete.[12]

One further element which entered into the spiritual background of the radical movement should here be noted. This is the growing spirit of independence shown among the peasants, and

Nürnberg, pp. 80 *passim,* for a fuller statement of the facts chronicled above.

[12] For these final steps see Roth, *Die Einführung der Reformation in Nürnberg,* esp. pp. 194–210. *Cf.,* Janssen, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes,* Vol. II, pp. 350–364. Charitas Pirkheimer's *Denkwürdigkeiten* gives a melancholy picture of conditions in Nuremberg, especially with reference to the attacks of the Evangelical party upon monasteries and convents. See, too, articles by Pickel and Kolde in B. B. K. G., 1912 and 1913, where interesting details are brought to light.

the activity of popular peasant preachers, in the region about Nuremberg.[13] Diepold Peringer, the "peasant of Wöhrd," who claimed to be unable either to read or write and asserted that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, won a considerable following in Wöhrd and Thon, villages in the vicinity of Nuremberg, and even in the city itself. He seems to have possessed much native ability as a popular preacher. Spalatin, chaplain to Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, heard him and was greatly impressed by the appeal which he made to imagination and conscience.[14] The Council, on complaint of Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and brother of Emperor Charles, ordered him to cease preaching and banished him from Nuremberg territory. Traces of his influence remained, however; doubts and questionings raised by him could not be eradicated by the simple expedient of banishing their author. This religious disaffection was bound up with the political and social unrest among the peasantry of south-central Germany during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, which ended with the outbreaks of 1524 and 1525. As a result two were put to death in the summer of 1524.[15]

It has not seemed necessary to enter in any detail upon a discussion of these various trends of

[13] Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 *et sqq.*; Kolde, *Hans Denck und die gottlosen Maler von Nürnberg,* pp. 2 *et sqq.*

[14] Enders, 5, p. 153 and note 2, p. 154.

[15] Will, *Beyträge zur Geschichte des Antibaptismus in Deutschland,* pp. 137 *et sqq.*

religious thought in Nuremberg. The aim has been simply to indicate something of the ferment that was everywhere apparent. All these elements exerted a distinct influence upon the separatist movement which was quietly taking shape, parallel to the changes in religion officially recognized in the city. For such a movement, directed as it was against all external authority in religion, the soil was well prepared.[16] Men had now to choose not only between their old Catholic faith and the new ideas of Luther, but among those of independent thought there was the necessity of choice, when the new movement began to limit itself and harden into a system, between the freedom of humanism and the straight lines of the Evangelical faith. The disputes and the defiance of regularly constituted ecclesiastical authority attendant upon the meetings of the imperial diets in Nuremberg must have impressed greatly men who were thoughtful spectators. Those whose minds were imbued with a reverence for authority might break with the authority of the past, but would be quite satisfied to accept the substitute offered by the great leader of the German revolt. It would scarcely occur to

[16] See for instance Janssen II, p. 357: "Welchem neuen Glauben, fragte [Charitas Pirkheimer], solle man denn folgen, da die Prädicanten einander widersprächen und ein jeder behaupte, er allein habe Recht." See also Capito to Zwingli, 6 Feb., 1525: "Apud imperii civitates (Norlingae et Nurnberge) quidam concionatores agunt inconsultius; quos puto causam dedisse, ut nunc pleraque ferveant studiis acerrimis." C. R., XCV, p. 302.

them to exercise independent judgment on anything except minor points. But how would this affect the man whose thought was really emancipated? More than once questions must have arisen which were not easy of solution. Why all this endless debate and recrimination? Why this emphasis upon formalism and the incidents of religion? It was evident that some reformation was needed, but was this to come through a shifting of authority? The answer that was almost certain to suggest itself would be that external authority was not essential. When authorities quarrel among themselves, the thoughtful layman may be pardoned for reserving judgment, and it would not be at all surprising if he should reach a solution other than that of the majority.

Among those men who were quietly observing the ferment and innovation in Nuremberg none is more interesting and worthy of consideration than Hans Denck, the rector of the school connected with the church of St. Sebald, one of the two most important churches in Nuremberg. He was among the most sweet-spirited, sane, and withal the most lovable of the men of his time, and none showed more independence in attacking and attempting to solve the problem of man's relation to his God. Almost nothing is known of his early life. Born in the little town of Habach in Bavaria, probably about 1495, he matriculated at the University of Ingolstadt in 1517, receiving his baccalaureate de-

gree two years later.[17] He is next heard of in Augsburg, where he identified himself with the humanistic circle, under the patronage of Veit Bild and Adelmann of Adelmannsfelden.[18] The following year (1521) he seems to have spent as a schoolmaster at Sterzing in Tyrol.[19] In 1522 he turned up at Basel as a proof reader, first for the press of Cratander and later for Curio. At the same time he attended some lectures by Œcolampadius on the prophet Isaiah.[20] The young student commended himself highly to the humanist and reformer, and a warm friendship sprang up between the two men.[21] When in 1523 the Nurembergers were looking about for a new rector for the school at St. Sebald's Denck was, on the recommendation of Œcolampadius, chosen for the place. In the fall of that year he entered upon his new duties at Nuremberg. There he lived and worked quietly in friendly relationship with humanists and reformers.

[17] Such scraps of knowledge as can be found concerning Denck's early life have been gathered by Keller. See especially his biography of Denck, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer.*

[18] Adelmann was a friend of Pirkheimer's, and like him was named in the bull condemning Luther. But he, like Pirkheimer, drew back from Luther's bold revolt.

[19] Kolde, p. 21. See also Denck's letters to Veit Bild published by Keller in his *Johann Staupitz,* pp. 401 *et sqq.* The name of the town is there given as Stotzingen. (See Kolde, p. 21, note 3.)

[20] Œcolampadius to Pirkheimer, 25, Apr., 1525. (*Opera Pirkheimeri,* p. 306.)

[21] Herzog, *Leben Œkolampads,* vol. II, App. nos. VI and VII, pp. 272 *et seq.* Denck to Œcolampadius, Oct., 1527, in *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer,* pp. 257 *et seq.*

Pirkheimer, who later became a bitter foe to Denck, was instrumental in securing the young teacher and seems to have taken an especial interest in him.[22] Of his life during the first few months of his stay in Nuremberg, however, but little is known. One or two references to him are all that can be found. Most important of these is his own report of a dispute which he had with Osiander regarding the Eucharist.[23] This is of interest since it indicates that he was something more than a passive spectator of the events that were transpiring about him, and also that he was not afraid to think and to speak with independence. That he was deeply interested in the religious ferment is further attested by the rapid development of his ideas during the few months of his stay in Nuremberg.[24] The situation was one well calculated to provoke thought. As indicated in the preceding pages two factions were there contending for mastery and both were appealing to the Bible as authority; each at the same time insisted that the other was wholly in error. One possible inference might easily be, therefore, that there must be some subjective norm by which the individual may test Scripture. This

[22] Keller, *Staupitz*, pp. 210 *et seq.*

[23] Denck to the Council of Augsburg in Keller, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer*, p. 250. Also Denck to Œcolampadius in Keller, *ibid.*, p. 251.

[24] That Denck was not in the least suspected of radical views when he came to Nuremberg may be gathered from letters of Œcolampadius to Pirkheimer, in Herzog's *Leben Œkolampads*, app. VI and VII, pp. 272 *et seq.*

is precisely the conclusion arrived at by Denck during these months.

It was not long before he was brought into contact with other elements which were to exert a powerful and permanent influence upon his thought, and through him upon the radical movement as a whole. Two streams of opposition to organized religion met at Nuremberg during the summer and fall of 1524. From the north came influences dominated by the teaching and personality of two of the most revolutionary of all the leaders, Karlstadt and Münzer. These men were radical chiefly in the sense that they opposed the existing authority — both in religion and society. They demanded tolerance for themselves and their own opinions, but were far from believing in tolerance as a principle. Their attempt was to establish their own orthodoxy, and it is of some significance that Luther and his followers got their first introduction to the groups of opposition through contact with these men and their tenets. It is very probable that their attitude toward all dissent was embittered and their condemnation of the "Anabaptists," when later they met them, was conditioned by these experiences. From the south there came the more sane, less dogmatic influence of the leaders from the upper Rhineland. With men from both these groups Denck seems from the first to have been in friendly relations, though spiritually much more akin to those from the southland.

In the summer of 1524, Hans Hut, an early disciple of Münzer, was at Nuremberg, plying his trade as a bookbinder.[25] A native of the village of Hain, Hut became a vestryman at Bibra.[26] Early won to the Evangelical faith, however, he enthusiastically embraced his new creed and was tireless in propagating it while wandering from place to place as a bookpeddler. In this capacity he travelled through Saxon, Thuringian, Franconian and even Austrian lands.[27] During his wanderings, through influences not now traceable, he came to have doubts regarding the efficacy of infant baptism and sought enlightenment on this question from the Wittenberg theologians. Their explanation failed to satisfy him. With characteristic impetuosity he thereupon jumped to the conclusion that, since they could not answer clearly and satisfactorily a question so fundamental, their preaching was powerless to work regeneration of life.[28] Returning to Bibra he was soon forced to move thence because of his refusal to have his child baptized.[29] Shortly thereafter he became connected with Münzer and made it his

[25] See his confession of 5 Oct., 1527, app. IV in Meyer, *Die Anfänge des Wiedertäuferthums in Augsburg*, p. 230. Meyer's study and the documents appended thereto contain our most complete information concerning Hut.

[26] Meyer, pp. 215 *et seq.* Hain is in eastern Saxony, Bibra is a town in electoral Saxony northwest of Naumburg and but a short distance from Allstedt.

[27] Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen von 1526–1584*, p. 26.

[28] Meyer, p. 224 (hearing of 16 Sept., 1527).

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 238.

task to disseminate the latter's writings.[30] Denck he met during his stay in Nuremberg in the summer of 1524,[31] and it is possible that he also met at this time Wolfgang Vogel, pastor at Eltersdorf, with whom at a later time he became closely associated.[32] How long he remained in Nuremberg during this visit of 1524, it is impossible to ascertain, but that he was well known in the city and that he discussed religious questions at this time is evident from his statements at Augsburg during the fall of 1527. He then said that he had been known in Nuremberg for the past ten years; he affirmed that he was well acquainted with Denck and had stopped at his house, and had also been at the homes of various other Nurembergers.[33] It was impossible, however, for him to remain for any length of time in one place; everywhere he quickly made himself obnoxious to the authorities. With tireless energy he travelled throughout central and southern Germany, preaching, baptizing, and distributing tracts. His power as a popular preacher was astonishing. At Augsburg alone his converts numbered thousands.[34] He was there apprehended by the authorities in September, 1527, and died the

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 240 *et sqq.*

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 224, 229.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 243. Eltersdorf was a little town situated in Nuremberg territory between Nuremberg and Erlangen.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 229 *et seq.*

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 220. *Cf.* also Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen*, p. 28. The documents which Wappler appends to his work bear eloquent testimony to Hut's tireless activity.

following winter — accidentally burned to death, it is believed, in an attempt to escape.[35]

Hut, in the first enthusiasm of his revolt, had accepted Münzer's revolutionary teaching in regard to the state,[36] and had a share in his activity during the peasants' revolt. Escaping the avenging sword of the princes, which ended Münzer's restless life, he boldly continued to preach inflammatory doctrines to the peasants. His later intercourse with Denck at Augsburg seems to have modified considerably his theories, but he never outgrew his chiliastic notions. By the exponents of law and order he was always looked upon as a dangerous fanatic; the fear of his influence did much to inspire the action taken by the Nuremberg Council to stamp out the sectarian movement.

Among the leaders of the "Anabaptist" movement, with the exception of Denck, there was no one who exerted a more direct influence upon the radical element in Nuremberg than did Hut. Others there were, however, who visited the city during the summer and fall of 1524. Hans Schlaffer, who was put to death at Schwatz in the valley of the Inn, either in 1527 or 1528, tells in his confession how he had met at Nuremberg Hans Denck and Ludwig Hätzer.[37] This meeting must have

[35] *Aigentliche beschreibung der handlungen so sich mit den widerteufern zu Augsburg zugetragen und verlaufen hat.* Pub. by Meyer in Z. K. G. 17, pp. 251–258, esp. pp. 255 *et seq.*

[36] Some notice of Münzer appears on pp. 42–46.

[37] Van Braght, *Martyrology,* Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 50; Ottius, *Annales,* p. 46.

taken place in the summer of 1524. Hätzer had been at Zürich, leaving there early in the summer, bound for south Germany.[38] It is probable that he was in Nuremberg either in July or August.[39] Of Schlaffer's activity there nothing is known. Hätzer, however, may well have exerted a considerable influence upon Denck. Though Zwingli speaks approvingly of him in his letter to Frosch,[40] he none the less belonged to the more radical party in Zürich, and Zwingli had already found it difficult to keep him in hand.[41] Keller believes that Denck and Hätzer had become acquainted in Basel, where both were engaged in reading proof for a publishing house.[42] If such is the case they must have there read together much of the literature of humanism and of revolt which was then coming from the Basel presses, and it is not difficult to imagine the subject matter of their discussion when they met again after two years. Their conversation could scarcely have failed to turn upon the religious innovations just now being pushed through both at Nuremberg and at Zürich. And Hätzer

[38] Letter of Zwingli to Frosch, C. R., XCV, p. 200.

[39] *Cf.* Heberle, "Johann Denck und sein Büchlein von Gesetz." In *Theologische Studien und Kritiken,* 1851, pp. 128 *et seq.*

[40] As noted above, C. R. XCV, p. 200.

[41] Article on Hätzer by Keim (revised by Hegler) in P. R. E. VII, p. 236, also Kolde, p. 23.

[42] In his *Staupitz,* p. 210. But see Roth, *Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte,* vol. I, p. 231, where he says that Denck and Hätzer had not met until they were together in Augsburg, 1527. Roth seems clearly to be in error.

must certainly have acquainted Denck with the ideas of those people at Zürich who were opposing infant baptism, and who were urging upon Zwingli more radical action.[43]

It must have been about this same time that Leonard Schiemer came to Nuremberg, where he learned the trade of tailor. Schiemer had been a Franciscan friar, but had become weary of conventual life and had left his monastery. From Nuremberg he went to Nickolsburg, which in 1526 became a recognized haven for "Anabaptists," and later to Tyrol. He was there charged with "Anabaptism" and was put to death, together with a number of his followers, in 1528. Of his life in Nuremberg nothing significant is discoverable. From the few known facts, however, the indications are that, even while in Nuremberg, he was a member of the radical group, and even something of a leader of that group.[44]

The men who have thus far been mentioned were young men with their ideas still fluid. They were merely groping their way toward principles which would in the next few years make them leaders in

[43] See Will's discussion of Hätzer's stay in Nuremberg in his *Beyträge zur Geschichte des Antibaptismus in Deutschland,* pp. 27–30. Will is such an earnest opponent of all "Anabaptists" that it is necessary to accept his testimony with great reserve. He had access to good sources, however.

[44] Beck, *Die Geschichtsbücher der Wiedertäufer in Œsterreich-Ungarn,* pp. 59 *et sqq.; Martyrology,* pp. 46 *et sqq.* (his name is here given as Schoener). Some six of his books are still extant. *Cf.* Keller, *Staupitz,* p. 227, note 1.

the "Anabaptist" movement. Feeling keenly the need for a more thorough revolt from the old ecclesiastical system than was being achieved under the leadership of either Luther or Zwingli, they none the less had not yet arrived at settled convictions. In the autumn of 1524 there came to Nuremberg one whose doctrines had already been evolved into a system and become established by conflict. This man was Thomas Münzer. Formerly Evangelical pastor at Zwickau, Münzer had found it wise, and indeed necessary, to change his place of abode because of the prominent part he had played in the activities of the "Zwickau prophets." After wandering about for some time he finally, in the spring of 1523, secured appointment to the Evangelical pastorate at Allstedt. There he carried on a religious propaganda tinctured with political and social tenets of a radical nature. This brought him into conflict with his prince, the Elector of Saxony. Luther, to whom appeal was made, bitterly attacked Münzer, but urged that, unless guilty of actual sedition, he should not be prosecuted by the civil authorities. The prince, however, insisted upon the necessity of adopting measures adequate to suppress the propaganda, and as a result Münzer found it necessary to set forth once more upon his wanderings. He shook the dust of Allstedt from his feet on 7 August, 1524. Thence he journeyed to Mülhausen where a friend of his, Heinrich Pfeiffer (called also Schwertfeger), had been

teaching radical doctrines since the spring of 1523. Here he hoped to be able to carry out his plans for setting up a politico-religious state. But the soil was not ready for his seed; he and Pfeiffer were both forced to leave Mülhausen, 27 September.[45] From Mülhausen Münzer travelled south, stopping at Nuremberg in order to get printed a defense of his position directed against the Wittenberg reformers, more especially against Luther. In this he was successful. The pamphlet appeared, probably late in October, under the title, "Hoch verursachte Schutzrede und antwwort, wider das Gaistlosse Sanfft lebende fleysch zu Wittenberg, welches mit verkärter weysse, durch den Diepstal der heiligen schrift die erbermdliche Christenheit, also gātz jämerlichen besudelt hat."

The title of this work expresses well the writer's point of attack. He can find no words too bitter to apply to Luther, whom he characterizes as revelling in sensuous indulgence and charges with having invoked the civil power to silence him. Münzer had received his first impulse to a new interpretation of Scripture from Luther, but he had also drunk deep of the German mysticism of the later Middle Ages.[46] His was a more stern, more uncompromising belief than Luther's. With the latter's theory that the Christian will achieve eter-

[45] For this date I follow Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen*, p. 15. Enders in his *Aus dem Kampf der Schwärmer gegen Luther*, p. vii, gives the date as 20 Sept.

[46] Wappler, *ibid.*, pp. 13 *et seq.*

nal happiness through the free grace of Christ, Münzer could not concur. For him such a doctrine took the earnestness out of religion. Every Christian must carry his own cross, must work out his own salvation.[47] From this idea he derived the belief in the Christian community as a people apart, the small group of the chosen.[48] He attacked also the thesis toward which Luther was rapidly tending that the Bible is the sole, absolute, and final authority in matters of faith. The Word is not a closed book but a continuous revelation of God to His children.[49] This belief regarding the immediacy of the relationship between God and the faithful carried with it an indifference to, even a prejudice against, accepted religious rites and forms of worship. All such "idolatrous" practices must be done away — by the prince if he will, by the people themselves if the prince refuse to act.[50] With these extreme religious ideas he combined social and political theories subversive of the established order.

It was inevitable that concepts such as Münzer held would bring him into conflict with constituted authority. Later they led him into the excesses of the peasants' revolt.[51] Münzer's part in that up-

[47] Müller, *Kirchengeschichte,* II, pp. 310 *et seq.*

[48] Wappler, *Thomas Münzer in Zwickau und die "Zwickauer Propheten,"* p. 12; Müller, II, pp. 310 *et seq.*

[49] Wappler, *ibid.,* p. 12.

[50] Müller, *ibid.,* pp. 312 *et seq.*

[51] That the peasants were justified in the demands which were embodied in the "Twelve Articles" and in taking up arms

rising is well known and it has tended to discredit him greatly in the estimation of his own and of later times. But in his fight with Luther the latter was not always right nor was Münzer always wrong. Luther won by the aid of the civil power, but he paid dearly for the victory. He lost much of the popular support which had been his during the early years of his revolt; many were prepared now to follow a Münzer rather than a Luther.[52] Among these were some of the citizens of Nuremberg. In a letter to Christoph Meinhard of Eisleben, written after his visit to that city in the fall of 1524, Münzer says: "I could have played a pretty game with the people of Nuremberg had I cared to stir up sedition, an accusation brought against me by a lying world. Many people urged me to preach, but I replied that I was not there for that purpose, but rather to answer my enemies through the press." [53]

It is not known how long Münzer remained in Nuremberg before continuing his journey southward. But it could scarcely have been more than a few days.[54] He did, however, leave two of his

in defense of them, is scarcely open to dispute today; but that they were guilty of grave excesses is also true. Perhaps, however, the chief count against them is their failure. In general the only justification of revolt, in any age, is success, and victory fled from their standards.

[52] *Cf.* Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen*, p. 12.

[53] Quoted from Seidemann, *Thomas Münzer*, pp. 48 *et seq.*

[54] Enders, *Aus dem Kampf der Schwärmer gegen Luther*, p. VII.

associates, Pfeiffer and Hans Römer, to look after the publication of the booklet.[55] It was not long before the city Council learned that Pfeiffer was pushing his propaganda in the hope of gaining followers. On the 26th of October an investigation was begun.[56] It had been previously ascertained that he had with him in manuscript two pamphlets which he wished to have printed. It was suspected that these might carry inflammatory material. Copies were therefore secured by the authorities and were turned over to the preacher of St. Lorenz, Osiander, for his opinion in regard to the orthodoxy of the views therein expressed. On the same day, 29 October, Pfeiffer was expelled from the city "because he was attempting by discussion to win followers." Since "the Council and community are well supplied with good preachers" he may "spend his money elsewhere." So read the official minutes of the Council.[57]

In his discussion of the pamphlets Osiander attacked Pfeiffer on the ground that he appealed to the Mosaic Law, which, according to the Nuremberg theologian, everyone knew had been superseded by Christ's law of love. Such teaching is

[55] Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* p. 38. Pfeiffer later suffered a fate similar to that of his leader. Römer lived to be a powerful factor in the introduction of the "Anabaptist" movement into Thuringia (see Wappler, esp. pp. 38–47).

[56] Kolde, p. 11, note 4.

[57] Pub. in Kolde, p. 12, note 1. The concluding phrase evidently refers to the money he was offering for the printing of his pamphlets.

" not only at variance with Scripture but is contrary to reason also." The Mosaic Law provides that false prophets be killed, and this Pfeiffer would do, killing as such all those who disagree with him. In the second place, he pointed out that the author opposed those preachers who hold to the true Word of God in Scripture, calling them bandiers of words and blind guides. " So they [Pfeiffer and his kind] would make Jews of us; when they will and when it is of worth for their fanaticism [rumorn] they stand upon the Mosaic Law. But where Scripture is against them, they ridicule it and point us to their spirit [inner Word] and deny that this spirit is given through the ear of faith.[58] They introduce murder, sedition, the overturning of rightful authority, and out of the spiritual realm of Christ they make an earthly kingdom that is not ruled by God's Word but by the sword and force." [59]

[58] " Wa aber die Schrift wider sie ist, dieselben verspotten und uns auf ihren gaist weisen, und verleugnen, das der gaist durch das gehör des glaubens geben werd." (Kolde, p. 30.)

[59] Printed by Kolde as App. II, pp. 28–30. Also printed in part by Möller in his *Osiander,* pp. 64 *et sqq.* The latter dates the document 20 October. That date Kolde has shown to be impossible, since the Council did not commence its inquiry until 26 October. Kolde does not attempt to date it. I have ventured 29 October as the date on which the pamphlets were handed to Osiander. In the Ratsverlässe for 29 October (Kolde 12, note 1) occur these words, " die auffgehobenen pucher behalten bis die besichtigt werden." Osiander in his Gutachten says, " Es sein mir sambstag nechst verschinen zway geschriebene buchlin . . . zugeschickt." Since 29 October fell on a Saturday it is probable the pamphlets were sent him on that day. If this be true, the reply of Osiander should be dated sometime the following week.

It has seemed worth while to summarize this document at some length because it shows so clearly the feeling of the dominant Evangelical leader in Nuremberg toward any tendency in the direction of dissent. In passing, it may be noted that he condemns Pfeiffer's appeal to the Mosaic Law. It will not be long, however, until that same law will be invoked by the Lutherans against the sectaries. He is even more outspoken than Luther in denouncing these men as seditious. This is important, for it was this fear of sedition which dominated the thought and influenced the action of the authorities in their dealings with the sectaries.

The action taken against Pfeiffer was induced by two considerations of expediency.[60] The first of these was the growing tension born of the peasant unrest, of which mention has been made above, and which seemed to demand vigilance on the part of constituted authority; the second was the necessity, felt by the members of the Council, of employing every possible means of keeping religious innovation within bounds. Technically, Nuremberg had not yet gone over entirely to the Evangelical faith; the Council felt constrained to maintain some form of loyalty to the Catholic Church. Complying with frequent complaints of Archduke Ferdinand, brother and representative in Germany of

[60] Hans Römer was included in the same decree against Pfeiffer, but was not expelled from the city. (Kolde, p. 12, note 1, and Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen*, p. 39, note 3.)

Charles V, a decree had been issued, in accordance with the Recess of the first Diet of Nuremberg, ordering that Luther's writings be suppressed. The Council apparently made no attempt to enforce this decree, but the fact that it was allowed to remain a dead letter rendered all the more necessary the suppression of propaganda carried on by the extreme radicals.[61]

Meanwhile measures were taken to suppress Münzer's booklet. On 29 October, Dominicus Schleupner, preacher at St. Sebald, was asked by the Council to read the pamphlet and report on its contents.[62] The Council then sought to punish the author and the publisher who put out such a work uncensored. As Münzer had left the city, they took up the case of the printer, Herrgott, at whose press the book was printed. It was found, however, that he was absent and that the work had been done by a foreign bookseller, Mellerstadt, with the aid of four of Herrgott's workmen. These latter were accordingly locked up in the tower and the copies of the book, in so far as possible, were destroyed. There seemed to be little disposition to push the case, however. On 2 November the prisoners were released on the promise never again to print anything that had not been passed upon by the authorities.[63]

61 Soden, *Christoph Scheurl*, II, pp. 174 *et seq.*, 201 *et seq.*

62 Minutes of Council. Kolde, p. 10, note 1.

63 For this discussion see Kolde, pp. 9 *et seq.* and the excerpts from the minutes of the Council which he there publishes.

It remains to mention one other leader of the radical movement who exerted a considerable influence in Nuremberg at this time — Andreas Bodenstein of Karlstadt.[64] During the early years of the Lutheran revolt he had been a friend and co-worker with Luther and he counted many friends among the Lutheran leaders at Nuremberg, with whom he seems to have achieved a considerable degree of popularity. This friendship had been more firmly cemented by the dedication of his booklet, "Von Anbetung und Ehrerbietung der Zeichen des neuen Testaments," to his "beloved patron" Albrecht Dürer.[65] It was, then, probably not by mere chance that, after he had gone into revolt against Luther and his system, and had in September, 1524, been expelled from the territories of the Saxon Elector, his book defending his position got itself into the hands of the Nuremberg printer, Hieronymus Hötzel, by whom it was published, probably in November.[66] Hötzel testified to hav-

Will, in discussing the incident, states that he has been unable to find a copy of the book. But it is enough for our good Lutheran "dass die kluge Vorsicht der nürnbergischen Obrigkeit sie untergedrücket und hiedurch einen Theil der verruchten münzerischen Absichten glücklich vereitelt hat." (P. 46.) Kirchhoff has written a little monograph on Herrgott, who appears to have been himself a follower of Münzer, entitled *Johann Herrgott, Buchführer zu Nürnberg, und sein tragisches Ende, 1527.*

[64] Andreas Bodenstein was born at Karlstadt. I follow here the general custom of calling him simply Karlstadt.

[65] Kolde, p. 16.

[66] The title of the book is *Von dem widerchristlichen Missbrauch des Herrn Brot und Kelch.* (Barge, *Karlstadt,* II, pp. 240 *et seq.*

ing received the manuscript from a "foreign traveller" [frembden landfarer]. It is possible that this "foreign traveller" was one Martin Reinhart, a former Lutheran preacher at Jena. The relations between Karlstadt and Reinhart had previously been close,[67] and when the former had gone into opposition to Luther he carried the latter with him. In order to get his books printed Karlstadt set up a press at Jena and secured Reinhart's assistance in carrying on this work. The disciple shared the fate of his master at the time of Karlstadt's expulsion from Saxon territories.[68] He seems to have come immediately to Nuremberg with his family, hoping apparently that earlier pleasant relations with influential citizens would gain him a friendly welcome.[69] His connection with the radical propaganda in Saxony was, however, well known

[67] Z. K. G. 1886, pp. 283 *et sqq.* Article by Kolde on Karlstadt *in Dänemark.*

[68] He had printed a report of the debate between Luther and Karlstadt (Jena, 21 August). It is probable that this called the attention of the authorities sharply to him. See Luther to Amsdorf, 27 October, 1524 (Enders, 5, p. 39): Orlamundae acta nequiter edidit Martinus Reinhardus Jhenensis praedicator in meam ignominiam et Carlstadii gloriam. Also his letter to Spalatin, 3 Oct. (Enders, 5, p. 32). The report is to be found in W. A., 15, p. 334.

[69] In March, 1524, Reinhart had published a little leaflet containing articles presented by the Bohemian Brethren at the Council of Basel in 1430. This he had dedicated to Pirkheimer, Anton Tucher, Hieronymus Ebner, and the whole Nuremberg Council. This fact was taken by Keller as proof of his theory that direct connection may be traced between the "Anabaptist" movement and the "Old Evangelicals." (See his *Staupitz,* pp. 202 *et seq.*) There can be no question that the "Anabaptists" had much in common with the earlier heretical bodies, but the sources which make definite that connection must

in Nuremberg. Immediate measures were therefore adopted to rid the city of his presence. On 17 December the following decree was issued: "Doctor Martin Reinhart, former preacher in Jena, who was connected with the fanatical movement at Allstedt, and who for this reason was expelled from Saxony . . . is here without permission from the Council. He shall, therefore, leave this city before tomorrow morning, together with his wife and children, and spend his money outside the jurisdiction of this Council." [70] If he failed to comply he would be dealt with accordingly, in what manner the reader is left to surmise. But that Reinhart had no doubt of the adequacy of the methods that would be employed is attested by the fact that nothing further is heard of his work in Nuremberg.

But to return after this slight digression to Karlstadt. On the day preceding the expulsion of Reinhart the Council ordered that all copies of Karlstadt's book should be secured, and that it should be ascertained by whom it had been printed. When

be read with much reserve. (*Cf.* Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* p. 2, and also Will, pp. 49 *et seq.*)

The title of the pamphlet is of some interest: "Antzeygung wie die gefallene Christenheit widerbracht müg werden in jren ersten standt in welchem sie von Christo und seynen Aposteln erstlich gepflantzt und auffgebawet ist. Vor hundert jaren beschrieben und yetzt allererst gefunden und durch den Druck an tag geben." 1524.

[70] Kolde, p. 18, note 1. The decree here quoted connects Reinhart with the propaganda at Allstedt. This is very evidently an error on the part of the Nurembergers. So far as can be learned he had no direct connection with Münzer's work.

it was found that Hötzel had printed the pamphlet, he was at once arrested. It was further decreed that all books of Karlstadt and Münzer should be confiscated and Hötzel was ordered to tell whence he secured the manuscript. Booksellers were forbidden to offer for sale any books except such as should have been favorably passed upon by the Council.[71]

Such were the measures employed by the authorities in defense of their faith. Agitators were quickly expelled; by a strict censorship of the press a determined effort was made to prevent their doctrines from gaining a foot-hold among the people. Like measures were taken by Margrave Casimir of Brandenburg-Ansbach, whose territories nearly surrounded those of Nuremberg. On 5 December, 1524, he issued a mandate forbidding the publication of any works by either Karlstadt or Münzer, or those of any other sect.[72] In January of the following year he followed this by a decree of banishment against Karlstadt, who had been hovering about Rothenburg on the Tauber.[73] Early in March a little pamphlet got itself into print at Rothenburg in which the writer complains bitterly of the action taken by the authorities, deploring especially the attitude of the preachers at Nuremberg. These, he believes, would themselves carry the wood to

[71] Kolde, p. 17, note 1.

[72] Barge, II, p. 243.

[73] Enders, *Aus dem Kampf der Schwärmer gegen Luther,* pp. 12 *et seq.*

burn any one who erred.[74] Between the preachers and the civil authorities life was made difficult for the free lances of religious thought in and about Nuremberg.

It was impossible, however, to crush out the radical propaganda. The seed sown by these wanderers — some merely groping toward a more individualistic point of view, some already in open revolt — had fallen on rich soil. It sprouted, grew, and during the next few years was to produce a harvest. Gradually there was formed in Nuremberg a group who discussed religious questions together and who were unable to find themselves in complete agreement with the prevailing doctrines.[75] How large this group was we have no means of knowing, nor is it safe to assume that the men comprising it recognized any particular bond of unity.[76] But that there was a considerable number who found themselves at variance with the orthodox

[74] *Ibid.*, p. 51. The pamphlet in question was written by Valentine Ickelschamer and is entitled, "Clag etlicher brüder: an alle christen von der grossen ungerechtickeyt und Tirannei, so Endressen Bodensteyn von Carolstat yetzo von Luther zu Wittenbergk geschicht." (Pub. by Enders, *op. cit.*)

[75] See, for example, *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler" von Nürnberg*, ed. by Kolde, pp. 236, 244, 246.

[76] Keller (in *Staupitz*, ch. 8) discovers a definite "brotherhood," adducing in proof the fact that Denck at his trial in January, 1525, spoke of the *gefangene Bruder* and also circulated his written statement at the trial among the people, or rather among a certain group. But Keller, in my judgment, goes too far. Such a theory rests on the belief that this group of radicals was a direct lineal descendant from the "Old Evangelicals."

Evangelical views there can be little doubt. Some of them had met with Reinhart,[77] were reading and distributing Karlstadt's and Münzer's works,[78] and were carrying on propaganda both in the city and throughout the countryside.[79] There were among them those in whom revolt confined itself to religious questions alone, others mingled political and social ideas of a radical nature as well.[80] Though there was no one set of principles to which all subscribed, there seems to have been a distinct community of interest. And among them the one who took the leading place and who is of most interest to us is Hans Denck.

It is Denck's figure and the part that he played as one of the pioneers and leaders in the sectarian movement as a whole, that lends peculiar interest to the study of just this period in the development of the radical revolt in Nuremberg. Whence he drew his peculiar ideas it is difficult to determine. His biographer finds many traces of German mysticism — of the works of Tauler, of the *Theologia Germanica* and the *Imitation of Christ*.[81] These works of earlier mystics were just at this time being put out in printed editions,[82] and it is probable

[77] *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler" von Nürnberg,* p. 246 and note 2.

[78] *Ibid.,* p. 246.

[79] *Ibid.,* p. 237.

[80] *Ibid.,* pp. 245, 250.

[81] Keller, *Ein Apostel der Widertäufer,* pp. 30–32.

[82] The influence of the printing press, making available books in relatively cheap editions and in greatly increased numbers, can hardly be overstated.

that Denck had become familiar with them as a proof reader at Basel.[83] But he was not alone in his debt to the earlier German mystics. Luther testified in warmest terms to the worth of the *Theologia Germanica* and accords it a high place in the moulding of his thought.[84] Münzer too had drawn much inspiration from the mystics.[85] The attempt, in fact, to conceive religion as a personal and immediate relationship with God is common to all ages. If there be any distinguishing feature in Denck's thought it lies perhaps in the fact that he was able to see a little deeper than his fellows into the essential meaning of this relationship.

Earlier in the chapter it was pointed out that there is no indication that Denck had displayed radical tendencies before coming to Nuremberg. Pirkheimer, who had been instrumental in securing him as a teacher in 1523, complained bitterly to Œcolampadius that his pupil had proved to be a wolf in sheep's clothing, and blamed his old friend for ever having recommended such a man to them. This called forth from Œcolampadius a strong disclaimer of any knowledge of radical tendencies in Denck. He warmly denied also the veiled hint that Denck had imbibed some of his heretical notions from him. "If Denck," he wrote, "has drunk

[83] Hegler, *Franck's Paraphrase of the Theologia Germanica*, pp. 4 *et seq.*

[84] See the *Vorrede* to his edition of the *Theologia Germanica*, in W. A., I, p. 378.

[85] Seidemann, p. 55.

poison it is not from me. I don't know that I ever discussed religious questions with him to any extent. He heard some lectures on Isaiah, but the reader may judge for himself what their nature was. . . . [Concerning the Eucharist] I have never spoken with him." [86]

It must have been in Nuremberg that he first openly developed radical tendencies. His connection with the leaders of opposition who from time to time visited the city has already been indicated. It seems clear that these outside impulses came much more largely from the north than from the south. With the social teachings of the northern radicals he had little in common, but with their religious views he was in much closer accord. Kolde has attributed much significance to a sermon preached in January of 1524 by Simon Häferitz, a pastor at Allstedt. This sermon later appeared in pamphlet form. It cannot be proved that Denck ever read it, but the ideas which he voiced at his trial about one year later show a striking similarity to the ideas there put forth, and it is quite possible that he had, in some way, become familiar with its contents. Häferitz attacks boldly the belief in the letter of Scripture. A man must experience the

[86] Œcolampadius to Pirkheimer, 25 Apr., 1525. (*Op. Pirk.*, p. 306.) See also a letter of Œcolampadius to Pirkheimer, Apr., 1525 (written before the above and before Pirkheimer's accusing letter had reached him) in which he expresses great surprise and concern regarding the report that had come to him of Denck's heresy. Pub. in Herzog, *Leben Œkolampads*. II, p. 272.

power of God working in and through him, must hear the living Word spoken to him directly. It is absurd to tell a man to believe what the Book tells him, as a sure means of salvation. One must have the Holy Spirit working in him as a regenerating force to purify his life. "It is senseless foolery to assert that pope, bishop, emperor, prince or lord, should order or forbid what the people are to believe or not to believe. A godless, reprobate knave cannot have faith, even though he had the whole ocean poured over him, and though he used up all the consecrated oil with which the whole world is anointed. . . . The holy Christian faith does not enter the heart till a man bids farewell to all his passions — both of the flesh and of the spirit, yes, even the cravings for the gifts of God, such as the Holy Scriptures, good words and works." [87]

A complete denial of the efficacy of mere form and ritual in religion, an insistence upon earnestness and morality, emphasis upon the personal relationship of the believer to God, assertion of the responsibility of each individual to choose for himself — these are the characteristic arguments of the sermon. Infant baptism avails not, "for how can an irresponsible child, who has neither wits, reason,

[87] Kolde, pp. 23 *et seq.* Häferitz had been a Carmelite monk; later, during the year 1522, he had studied at Wittenberg. He came to Allstedt as pastor of the Wibertskirche, probably before Münzer's arrival there. After weathering safely the peasants' revolt, he appears to have returned to the orthodox Lutheran faith.

nor understanding to know what he lacks, accept the Christian faith." The notion of the "inner Word" is clearly brought out.[88] A tendency to spiritualize religion, to get away from organization, ceremony, and ritual, is also apparent. This marks the direction of Denck's thought during the next few years. But he was to develop these ideas considerably further before his death.[89]

To these external influences — the study of the mystics and the radical propaganda — must be added in Denck's case the strong personal equation. He had been trained in the school of humanism and had there learned to trust his own reason. In Nuremberg he saw religious leaders quarreling among themselves, but all none the less appealing to the Bible as authority. To him Scripture seemed impossible of correct interpretation unless one had some guide that would assist in finding the true meaning. He discarded the interpretation of authority and sought a more personal guide. This he found in the Holy Spirit — the "inner Word" by which God communicates directly with the human heart. By its help the written Word is made clear. Much the same idea may be found in Luther's

[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 27. Kolde calls this the first clear voicing of the fundamental tenets of "Anabaptism."

[89] This is evident from his letter of Oct., 1527, to Œcolampadius, to which reference has already been made. In this he insists that he cares not how one worships; form and ritual count for nothing. He belongs simply to the brotherhood of the followers of Christ. (Pub. by Keller in *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer*, pp. 251 *et sqq.*)

early utterances, but Luther found himself under the necessity of greatly limiting his theory to meet the needs of a practical system. Denck had no system to uphold; his was a message for the individual, and the keynote of that message was freedom.[90]

[90] *Cf.* Jones, *Spiritual Reformers,* p. 22.

Chapter III

THE CLASH WITH AUTHORITY

From the discussion in the preceding chapter it would appear that the presence of Denck, during the first critical years in the growth of dissent from Lutheran orthodoxy, gave special significance to the religious situation in Nuremberg. A further reason for its claim to our attention is to be found in the fact that here, as early as 1525, the Council was brought face to face with the problem of concerting some definite proposals for action to be taken in regard to these anarchists in religion. Nuremberg was one of the first cities to embrace the Evangelical faith. For a considerable period prior to March, 1525, the Council was engaged in forming plans for the final break with the Catholic hierarchy and for the abolition of Catholic rites. It was inclined to look sharply at any movement which would tend to discredit the new faith. The part which Münzer and his followers were playing in the peasant risings of 1524 and 1525 must greatly have increased the uneasiness in the city, and strengthened the desire to quench any spark of revolutionary doctrine before it should break into flame. Social and religious unrest was growing all over Germany. Men everywhere were putting forth fan-

tastic and impossible notions, and were appealing to Scripture in support of them.[1] Such propaganda tended to cast discredit upon the Evangelical movement as a whole, and Lutherans had not as yet any organization with which to meet the growing danger.

According to the then prevailing custom there had been nothing unusual or revolutionary in the action of the Nuremberg authorities in the case of the foreign agitators, who were expelled and the sale of whose books was forbidden. They had, by swift and decisive action, guarded against possible sedition and protected the citizens from foreign propaganda. Such action was not a subject of especial comment, as it was considered one of the proper and normal functions of a state. But how to deal with its own citizens who had embraced radical views was another matter; and this more difficult problem now presented itself. Under the old laws, both secular and ecclesiastical, heresy — and the radical movement would have been considered such — had its swift and sure punishment. Heretics were tried in ecclesiastical courts and, if they proved stubborn, turned over to the secular arm for punishment. The Council at Nuremberg, however, now recognized no ecclesiastical jurisdiction in its territories; it had connived with the preachers in their refusal to obey the Bishop of

[1] Note for instance the letter of Urbanus Rhegius to Ambrosius Blaurer in *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer,* ed. by T. Schiess, Vol. I, no. 66.

Bamberg when he attempted to exercise his jurisdictional function.[2] The whole of Luther's teaching, since the nailing up of the theses, had been to the effect that the civil arm must not be employed in dealing with heresy. During the past summer, in reply to a letter of Duke John Frederick of Saxony, he had written, "There must be sects," and had advised that no measures be taken against them by the civil power.[3] Lutheranism had no theory or machinery at hand which could be employed in such a case. With ecclesiastical sanctions at an end, the question now to be settled was whether the civil authority — the state — should assume full jurisdiction, or whether false doctrine should be left for the clergy to handle through teaching and preaching. At Nuremberg, during the months from October, 1524, to January, 1525, the Council was forced to at least a partial solution of that problem.

The first member of their own community with whom the authorities had to deal was one Hans Greiffenberger, a painter, who employed spare mo-

[2] Documents in Strobel, *Miscellaneen,* Bk. III. Pt. II. See esp. p. 59, art. 14 of questions asked by the Bishop of Bamberg of the Provosts of St. Sebald and St. Lorenz, and the Prior of the Augustinians, 12 Sept., 1524. "Item ob sie sich erkennen untter des Bischoffs jurisdiction zu seyn. Antwort: Wir haben keyn herrn, dann Gott alleyn. Aber umb des willen seyn wir aller creatur interworffen, also dem nach das uns auch entgegen dem wort Gottes wirt oder wider unser gewissen."

[3] *Von dem aufruhrischen Geist,* July 1524, W. A., 15. Luther's thought in this field will be dealt with at some length in the following chapter.

ments writing religious tracts. Of his life almost nothing is known, but of his writings no less than seven pamphlets, written during the years 1523 and 1524, are still extant. The contents of these pamphlets show that the writer was in accord with the main tenets of the Lutheran faith. In some he takes his stand definitely on the side of Luther, basing his argument on the latter's *Freedom of a Christian Man;* in regard to the others scholarly opinion is divided, though the weight of evidence seems to indicate that little if anything can be found in them contradictory to Luther's viewpoint.[4] Though his pamphlets offer no definite clue to any radical principles, the result was to show that he had somewhere imbibed unorthodox notions regarding the Eucharist. The most probable source from which to trace this new influence is Karlstadt's pamphlet, mentioned in the previous chapter, the teachings of which Reinhart was busying himself in propagating.

[4] I have been able to examine none of these pamphlets myself. A list of them is given in Kolde, pp. 12–24. Will, *Gelehrten Lexicon I,* p. 570 *et seq.,* gives a slightly different catalogue containing one book not listed in Kolde. Will says of Greiffenberger, "He is worthy of a more careful treatment than can be given here because of lack of material. He is one of the first who in Nuremberg maintained the truth of the Evangelical position." Keller in his *Staupitz* (p. 231 *et seq.*) sees in his pamphlet, "Ob das evangelium seine Kraft von der Kirche habe," a voicing of the position of the "Evangelical" groups against Luther. Möller (*Osiander,* p. 66) holds that in his "Ein kurtzer begrif von gutten werken" he attacks the Lutheran idea of the Eucharist; but Kolde does not so read the pamphlet (p. 15, note 1).

With the Council he came into collision because of some caricatures drawn by him and directed against the Pope. As one of the chief counts in the charge against him was irregularity in his belief concerning the Eucharist, it seems highly probable that these caricatures had satirical verses appended in which he made some reference to this sacrament.[5] However that may be, the minutes of the Council show that he was taken to task because of the caricatures and because, as they alleged, he was enticing people into a new sect.[6] A written reply to this charge was required from him. When this was received it was turned over to Osiander for his judgment and advice regarding the proper action to be pursued.

The reply of Osiander, handed to the Council some time early in November, merits careful attention.[7] Osiander's advice had already been sought by the Council regarding the two pamphlets which Pfeiffer had been scattering about the city. In that instance he was appealed to as an expert to examine the pamphlets and report on the character of their contents. The Council merely sought advice, which he gave. In the case of Greiffenberger, however, he went further. He was asked not only to pronounce upon the orthodoxy of the painter's reply

[5] *Cf.* Kolde, p. 15.

[6] This second count against Greiffenberger is interesting in that it seems to imply the presence of a definite group of radicals.

[7] This appears in full as App. II in Kolde, p. 30 *et seq.*

to the charge brought against him, but he was also invited to suggest, or at all events did suggest, a policy to be pursued by the Council in dealing with the case. It is one thing to render an expert opinion; it is quite another to point out a mode of procedure. It marks the beginning of the union of civil and religious authority for the suppression of heterodoxy in Evangelical Nuremberg. The latter advises, the former acts on that advice.

That Osiander was inclined to be lenient with the accused appears in his reply. He affirms that he finds in the statement of Greiffenberger nothing to which exception could be taken, "except where he says that the holy sacrament of the altar is simply bread and wine, not flesh and blood." All else therein is written in a perfectly Christian spirit. He professes himself surprised that Greiffenberger could thus have been led astray. Acting upon the suggestion of a friend he discussed the matter with him and found him to be in serious error. But in so far as this is simply a matter of personal belief it "is to be opposed by God's Word alone." However, since the painter has openly expressed his views and has given others cause for doubt, careful cognizance must be taken of the matter for the sake of the community, provided he refuses correction. Together they have carefully gone over the whole matter; the true belief has been expounded to him from Scripture; his errors have been pointed out; he has confessed his errors, and has given assurance that

he will from now on cling to the true faith and will give no one else cause to deviate therefrom.

Now, concluded Osiander, since it is necessary to consider not alone the future, but even more the present possibility of others falling into like error, it seems to me better to accept his promise of correction — provided there are no other counts against him. For one who has erred, but has truly repented, is of more value to us as an example of such error than ten who might cling to their fault and be punished by the authorities. Therefore it seems best to me that he should be dealt with in all kindliness.

It would have been well had Osiander remained true to this spirit of forbearance. Especially to be noted in this opinion is his argument that wrong belief is not in itself a matter over which the civil authorities have any jurisdiction. In this he was one with Luther; he held that God's Word must contend in this field. But the propagation of error must not be tolerated. In case one proved a source of contamination to the community some appropriate action should be forthcoming. What that action should be we are not informed, but that the civil power might in such cases proceed to punishment seems never to have been doubted. The question of when and how far it might act was merely a matter of expediency.[8]

[8] Upon what grounds the civil power would act we are left to conjecture. I suspect, however, that there was an ill-defined

The Council accepted the advice of the preacher, trusting apparently in the thorough character of Greiffenberger's conversion. Though considered worthy of punishment he was allowed to go free, the Council contenting itself with a warning. He was told that his actions would be watched; that he was to desist from painting any more caricatures; that he must avoid any return to the group through whom he had fallen into error; and, finally, that he was to make full retraction.[9]

On the same day, 11 November, that his case was disposed of, the Council was considering that of a certain Marx von Weiblingen. Marx kept a public house, and word had come to the authorities that among his guests there had been loose talking concerning the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. He was ordered to give an account of the proceedings at his tavern and to give the names of the guests there present.[10] No further action was taken, however. The incident simply serves to indicate the continued agitation due to this radical element.

sense that the propagation of error constituted sedition. Luther, however, only a few weeks before had stated clearly that this was not sedition and that the civil power was not competent to take action in such matters. (See letter to John Frederick of Saxony, W. A., 15, pp. 210–221.) But Luther himself had already been constrained to modify his views somewhat in the case of Karlstadt. That the theory here voiced is, however, more drastic than Luther's at this period there can, I think, be no question.

[9] Minutes of Council, 11 November. In Kolde, p. 15, note 3.

[10] Kolde, p. 16, note 2.

When Osiander made his report to the Council regarding Greiffenberger, he at the same time handed it a "short account of the causes which may have led the common, untutored man to consider the holy sacrament of the altar bread and wine only, and not the flesh and blood of Christ; together with a short discussion of the passages of Scripture against which such errors beat and break themselves in vain." [11] By this means he hoped to strengthen the faith of any who might be wavering on the brink of error. But such efforts were rendered nugatory by active propaganda from outside and the increasing fondness exhibited by some members of the community for questioning accepted doctrines. Scarcely a day passed without the Council having to do with some question concerning irregularity in religious belief.[12] Continual vigilance was required. On 28 December Erasmus Wisperger, a clerk, was taken into custody for reading aloud in the market-place from one of Karlstadt's pamphlets, despite the decree of the Council forbidding the possession of his books.[13] Three days later Hans Platner, an otherwise unknown painter, together with several other persons, was accused of some loose talking in regard to the Eucharist.[14]

[11] Möller, *Andreas Osiander; Leben und ausgewählte Schriften*, p. 67 *et sqq.*

[12] Kolde, p. 12.

[13] Minutes of the Council, 28 Dec. (Kolde, p. 18 *et seq.* and note 1, p. 19.) To Dominicus Schleupner was given the task of instructing him in the true faith.

[14] Minutes of the Council, 31 Dec., "ungeschickte red von sacrament geredt lassen annemen." (Kolde, p. 19, note 1.)

All this came suddenly to a head early in the following month. It was then brought to the attention of the authorities that two painters had been guilty of voicing extreme views regarding the nature of the Eucharist. These two men were the brothers Bartel and Sebald Behaim, of the school of Albrecht Dürer.[15] On the 10th January the Council held a

[15] One is struck by the fact that the majority of those whose radicalism was brought to the attention of the Council at this time were painters. Kolde (p. 19) explains this on the ground that the introduction of the Evangelical faith into Nuremberg had greatly injured their profession inasmuch as the sale of saints' pictures and the like fell off immensely. This threw them into opposition to all religion. Keller explains it in a manner entirely different. According to his view Dürer, along with a number of other leading men of Nuremberg, if not wholeheartedly a Waldensian, had, at least, strong leanings in that direction. The Behaim brothers were pupils of his and drew much of their inspiration, both artistic and religious, from him.

The question is interesting but is very much in the air, and is not sufficiently essential for our present purpose to justify its discussion here. For the differing points of view of Keller and the Lutheran theologians championed by Kolde, see especially Keller's *Johann von Staupitz* (chap. 8), *Die Waldenser und die Bibelübersetzungen,* and *Grundfragen der Reformationsgeschichte: eine Auseinandersetzung mit litterarischen Gegnern;* Kolde's *Johann von Staupitz ein Waldenser und Wiedertaufer* in Z. K. G. VII, p. 426 *et sqq.*

Biographers of the various leaders — Karlstadt, Münzer, Denck, *et al.* — make a point, properly enough, of seeking to trace the influence of their respective subjects upon the radical movement as a whole. For two reasons no such attempt is made here. In the first place, the important thing for our study is to discover the relations between the sectaries, of whatever complexion, and the Evangelical authorities; and in the second place, any attempt to differentiate, further than has already been done, between various lines of thought would necessarily proceed from the investigation of all available source material, much of which remains still hidden in the archives of central Europe.

preliminary examination of these men. At this hearing another painter, Georg Pentz, and the rector of St. Sebald, were indicated as having been in the groups where the Behaim brothers had expressed their doubts [Mangel] in regard to certain points of doctrine.[16]

The odium of being the inspirer and leader of this group seemed to attach itself to Denck. He was, therefore, immediately taken into custody. His preliminary hearing proved unsatisfactory.[17] He was thereupon required to put into writing his belief regarding various points of Christian doctrine, and this document was then turned over to a group of five preachers for their opinion upon the points there set forth.[18]

[16] The documents are given in *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler" von Nürnberg*, pp. 244 *et sqq*. But since they are undated it is impossible to determine with complete accuracy just when the hearing was held at which Denck was implicated. (*Cf. ibid.*, p. 243.) In the minutes of the Council for 12 Jan., however, three painters (Behaim brothers and Pentz) are mentioned (*ibid.*, p. 230). It seems probable, therefore, that the hearing of 10 Jan. was the one at which Denck and Pentz were implicated.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 243.

[18] Die syben artickel, mir fürgehalten sind dise: was ich von der schrift, sünd, gerechtigkeyt gottes, gesetz, evangeli, tauff, und nachtmal halte. (Denck to Council of Augsburg, 1526. In Keller, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer*, p. 250.) Denck here says that Osiander was to reply to this discussion of his on these points. But they are identical with the points mentioned in the *Gutachten* of the five preachers. (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei Gottlosen Maler,"* p. 237 *et sqq*.) Keller inclines to connect Denck's trial with an earlier disagreement with Osiander concerning the Eucharist, and Denck's letter to the Council of Augsburg seems to bear out this contention.

This confession of faith — for such it amounted to — indicates how fluid were Denck's ideas at this time. In some places it is vague and obscure almost to the point of being unintelligible. Through the whole of it there runs a mystical strain. Most prominently expressed is the belief in the immediacy of the relationship between the individual and his God, and the uselessness of forms and sacraments as a means of attaining to a state of grace.

It is worth while to consider this statement with some care as it shows clearly with what manner of revolt the magistracy was called upon to deal. A paraphrase, therefore, of the main points will not be out of place.

I find, he writes, that I am innately a wretched person, subject to every illness of body and soul. But I feel also within me something which power-

"Ich bin bey anderhalb jaren daselb schulmeister gewesen und hinden nach mit Osiander, daselbst prediger, ettlicher wort halben vom sacrament sonderlich zwispennig worden und darauff für einen E. rat gefordert und erschinen zu verantworten. . . ." Keller assumes that it was at the instance of Osiander that Denck was cited before the Council in December. (*Op. cit.*, p. 37, and *Reformation und Ketzerschulen*, p. 39.) The documents as Kolde has edited them tell no such story. Osiander does not appear as the accuser of Denck nor is there any indication that the latter was apprehended before 10 Jan., at the earliest. Just why he should write as he did to the Council at Augsburg it is difficult to determine. It is probable, however, that he never knew the true reason for his arrest, and simply attributed it to his quarrel with Osiander. That he would attempt to make the charge against him seem minor, inasmuch as he was urging that he be allowed to settle in Augsburg, is also probable. (*Cf.* Kolde, p. 50, note 2.)

fully opposes this innate wretchedness and shows me the way to life and blessedness to which it seems as impossible for my spirit to rise as it seems impossible for my body to rise to the visible heavens. It is said that by faith one may attain life. That may be, but how comes one to that faith? If it is innate then must "life" also be innate, but that cannot be. From childhood I learned the faith[19] from my parents by word of mouth,

[19] This probably means the *Credo* of the Catholic faith, or at least the traditional beliefs which he had imbibed as a child. Kolde (*Hans Denck und die gottlosen Maler,* p. 53) comments thus on the passage: "Er habe von Kindheit an von seinen Eltern "den Glauben" gelernt und deutlich identifiziert er in römischer Weise das Credo oder das Fürwahrhalten desselben mit dem von ihm bekämften aber völlig unverstandenen evangelischen Glaubensbegriff." On this *cf.* also Keller, *Staupitz,* p. 233, note, where is suggested a different interpretation.

The whole of this important passage is obscure. It reads as follows:

Ich Johann Dengk bekenn das ich in der warhayt befinde, fül and spür, das ich angeborner weysz ein armutseliger mensch bin, nemlich der aller kranckheyt leybs und der seelen underworffen ist.

Spür aber doch darneben auch ettwas in mir, das mir meinem angebornen muttwillen krefftig widerstand thut, und zaygt mir an ain leben oder seligkait dahin es mein seel so unmüglich gedunkt zu kommen, als es meinen leyb unmüglich gedunckt in den sichtigen himel zu steygen.

Man sagt, durch den glauben kumme man zu dem leben. Lass ich sein. Wer gibt mir aber den glauben? Ist er mir angeborn, so müsst ich doch das leben von angeborner weysz haben, das ist nit.

Ich hab von kindheyt auff von meinen eltern den glauben gelernt im mund umbgezogen, darnach auch durch menschliche bucher gelesen und noch vil mehr mich eins glaubens gerümbt, aber in der warhayt das gegentayl so mir von natur angeborn ist, nye recht betracht, wie wol es mir zu vil malen für geworffen ist.

later read books that discussed it, and even more I boasted thereof. But in truth, though it had often troubled me, I had never rightly considered the opposite which is inborn in me. This innate wretchedness shows me clearly that it was a false faith to which I clung. For indeed, the more I strive, the more I am gripped by this inborn sickness or wretchedness.

I would gladly have faith, a faith that is life, but since such a faith does not seem to be a part of my being, I cannot deceive myself or others. In truth, should I say today that I have faith, tomorrow I might prove myself false — and yet not I but the truth [die warhayt] which I experience within me. This voice within me I know to be the truth; therefore, if God wills, I shall obey it and will permit no one to take it from me.

Disen falschen glauben strafft gewissz vorgemelte angeborne armutseligkayt. Damn ich sihe in der warheytt, das alle die weyl dise angeborne kranckhayt oder armutseligkayt nicht im grund abnymbt, ye mer ich mich butz und mutz, ye mer sy von nötten zunymbt.

. . . . . .

Ich wollt gern das ich glauben, das ist leben hette. Aber dieweyl sichs nit gründtlich in mir erfindet, mag ich weder mich noch ander leut betriegen.

Ja wann ich heut saget, ich glaube, so möcht ich mich morgen doch selbs lüg straffen, aber nit ich, sonder die warhayt, so ich in mir zum teyl empfinde.

Dises weysz ich bey mir gewisz, das es die warhayt ist, darumb will ich im ob gott will zu hören, was es mir sagen wölle, und wer es mir nemen will, dem will ich nit gestatten. (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* pp. 231 *et seq.*)

When I attempt to interpret Scripture by my own powers, I can understand nothing. Of myself I cannot believe Scripture. But this power within me that drives me without my will or assistance, that it is which forces me to read Scripture as a witness of the truth.[20] And as I read it I find therein witness to the fact that the power that thus drives me is Christ, to whom Scripture bears testimony as the son of the All-Highest. Therefore I hold with Peter that Scripture is a light that shines through the darkness. But that darkness will not be entirely dispelled until the everlasting light shines forth, when the sun of Christ's righteousness appears and lightens our hearts, then will the darkness of unbelief be driven away. But such light is not yet in me.

Since such darkness is still in me, how can I of myself understand Scripture? and, therefore, how can I from Scripture attain to faith? One must await the revelation from God. Where a man will not await such revelation, but takes to himself work which appertains to the spirit of God and Christ, he makes of the secrets of God an abomination before Him, and makes of the grace of God mere lewdness, as can be learned from the Epistle of Jude and from II Peter 2. It is through this that so many sects have arisen since the apostles, which

[20] Von natur kan ich ye der schrifft nit glauben. Aber das in mir, nit das mein, (sag ich) sonder das mich treybt, on allen meinen willen und zuthun, das treybt mich die schrifft zu lesen umb zeugknusz willen. (*Ibid.*, p. 232.)

have all armed themselves with misunderstood texts of Scripture, because they have trusted to their own presumption, and have of themselves assumed a false faith before they have received true faith from God. Therefore, said Peter, Scripture is not a matter of one's own interpretation, but belongs to the Holy Ghost who was also the first to give it. "Of this interpretation of the Holy Spirit each individual must first make sure by himself. When he does not do this, it is false and of no account. What is false and worthless can be refuted by other texts from Scripture." [21]

This is the fundamental basis of Denck's belief. Instead of the man by nature wholly evil, he feels within him an impulse struggling toward goodness and light. This must be aided by the spirit of Christ working through the individual soul and compelling it toward the right. This is the "inner Word," so-called, and by its aid Scripture is to be understood. This thought is not so radically different from Luther's early belief in the Word of God in Scripture. But while Luther was gradually being driven to seek some form of external authority Denck, on the other hand, had advanced to the thought of a subjective norm; the spirit of Christ which made possible the correct understanding of Scripture was within the individual. Luther, too,

[21] Dieser auszlegung des geysts musz ein yeglicher zu vor bey ym selbs gewissz sein, wo nit, so ists falsch und nichts. was falsch und nichts ist, kan man mit anderm gezeugknusz der schrift niderlegen. (*Ibid.*, p. 233.)

had said that through the aid of the Holy Ghost the individual should read and interpret the Scriptures for himself. That such a theory would lead to varying interpretations he had not foreseen. But what he claimed for himself another was sure to demand, with the inevitable result that unanimity in belief would be shattered.

There was one point, however, at which Denck's thought was opposed to Luther's, and this the Nuremberg theologians were not slow to seize upon. Denck felt within himself an impulse toward goodness. Man is not therefore by nature wholly evil and incapable of any good thing. More than Luther he stressed the responsibility of the individual. It is incumbent upon him to give ear to the inner voice and to seek to become right with God, and to him God may speak directly without the mediation of a priesthood or even of a book.

Upon this foundation Denck built his conception of sin, God's righteousness [Gerechtigkeit Gottes], the law, the gospel — the special points upon which he was interrogated by the preachers.[22] The time allowed him did not permit a discussion of baptism and the Eucharist.[23] As these were two of the principal points in question, the Council gave him more time in which to complete his statement. His belief concerning baptism clearly shadows the later "Anabaptist" viewpoint. It is only as the outward sign of a spirit right with God that bap-

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 233 *et seq.* [23] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

tism has any meaning or efficacy. The belief of the individual must precede the act; he who believes and is baptized, he is made blessed. To the man who is essentially unclean in body and soul, outward washing avails nothing; the cleansing process must proceed from within. The almighty Word of God must find lodgment in the heart of man. The baptism of Christ is of the spirit, a consummation of His work, the sign of a conscience at peace with God. Outward baptism is not essential for salvation, but the baptism of the spirit is essential. "Therefore it stands written, he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16).[24] Nor is his belief concerning the nature of the sacrament of the altar any less revolutionary. To partake of the Eucharist with profit one must first become one with Christ. It is a very wholesome reuniting with Christ if partaken of by a believer. Faith, however, is necessary. It must be partaken of in both kinds, and is thus the outward expression of inner love and faith. One can live without the "outward bread" through the power of God, as did Moses on Sinai and Christ in the Wilderness, but without the "inner bread" can no one live, for by faith live the righteous. "Who believes not, lives not." [25]

All this, concludes Denck, I confess before God invisible, upon whom I cast myself without reserve.

On 16 January this confession of faith was turned

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 234 *et seq.* [25] *Ibid.*, p. 235 *et seq.*

over to the preachers for their judgment.[26] Their answer was handed to the Council a few days later.[27] This document is as interesting as is the statement which called it forth. While the latter indicates the ideas that the defenders of the Lutheran faith considered it necessary to suppress, the former serves as a key to the developing Evangelical policy of repression. In it one finds none of the moderation shown by Osiander in the case of Greiffenberger a few months previously. In their view matters have now gone too far. It is no time to discuss leniency when the faith that one has struggled to establish is endangered and the good name of one's city as well as the whole Evangelical cause is being brought into disrepute by harebrained fanatics.[28]

After rehearsing how Denck had been spreading error among the people, had been examined orally by the preachers without satisfactory results, and had then been required to answer in writing questions regarding his faith, they proceeded to take sharp exception to this written reply. He had not given a straightforward answer to the questions propounded to him, but had exerted himself to render

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 237 and note 1.

[27] Probably 20 Jan., not 11 Jan., as in Keller, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer,* p. 39. *Cf. Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 237 and note 2. The document is there printed, pp. 237–242.

[28] Note the statement of the theologians, found in *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 248.

his thought abstract, "for the written statement is not so pointed as his speech" [dann die schrifft redet nicht so spitzig als er thut]. The way in which he has colored his ideas makes it evident that an alien spirit impels him, and not at all the spirit of Christ which has worked through all the prophets and apostles in a far different manner. It is possible to construe his written reply so as to make it seem orthodox and in such wise that his words might be tolerated, but we know well the wiles of Satan, who thus seeks to nullify the power of God.[29] Where one holds partly to Scripture as expounded by the Holy Ghost and partly to his own vague notions, the inevitable outcome is division, argument, and mutual distrust. Thus it was that the tower of Babel could not be built after people began to talk in different tongues. Even so we cannot rightly interpret the Holy Gospel if we do not speak in the same terms — terms which we must learn from the Holy Spirit through Scripture.

[29] I cannot wholly agree with Keller (*Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer*, p. 40) when he says that the preachers are here saying that Denck might be tolerated were it not for the necessity of maintaining unity in the Lutheran Church. There is no question that the maintenance of unity was the compelling motive with them, but that they further condemned his teaching as unchristian and therefore not to be tolerated, is shown by the preceding sentence. "Also das es billich einem yeden Rechten Christen umb der ursach willen solt argwonig sein, dann das sein red nicht die art sey, die der heilig gaist. In der schrifft allenthalben furet, ist so klar unnd offenbar, das wir unns gentzlich versehen, er selbs konns und werds nicht laugnen." (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 237. *Cf.* also Kolde, p. 60, note.)

Here it will be noted the theologians took issue with Denck's notion of the "inner Word." There is but one way to interpret Scripture. He should have recognized the absolute authority of the Bible. There is no difficulty in understanding Scripture if one honestly wishes to comprehend its meaning. Only when one has no desire to follow the precepts therein found does one experience difficulty in interpretation. God is the master; the Bible or sermon, the tool; as little as the master can accomplish anything without the tool, will God give faith to one who despises Scripture or preaching. Thus would the good Lutheran divines dispose of Denck's appeal to a subjective norm, an "inner Word."

With this prelude the theologians then launched a specific attack against Denck who held that Scripture simply bears testimony to the truth of God, which he felt to be immediately within him. Were this the spirit of Christ within him, then he must have faith. But he admitted that he has not attained faith. That something within him, then, must be the devil.

In his answers to the specific questions put to him regarding law, sin, the gospel, etc., the theologians found Denck to be, in their view, hopelessly in error. Not only did he contradict himself, but his error was in some cases worse than that of the Papists, nay, even than that of the Jews. His notion of the "inner baptism" was absolutely false. One cannot hold that the baptism of water

is unnecessary. This is entirely capable of proof from Holy Writ. Regarding the Eucharist, he has answered at length with arguments spun from his own head rather than grounded in Scripture. His examiners seem to assume that Denck had accepted Karlstadt's notion of the symbolic nature of the Eucharist, since their argument consists chiefly in showing that the body and blood of Christ is actually present in the bread and wine. From Denck's utterances one may easily gather that he was tending toward a rationalistic explanation of this sacrament; he makes the partaking of it a matter of no great importance, but it is not possible to find that he anywhere denies the real presence of Christ in the sacrament.[30]

From these errors the theologians affirm they tried diligently to win Denck, but to no avail. To all instruction from them he turned a deaf ear. He has asserted in his statement that he has the truth and will permit no one to take it from him. Moreover, he has circulated a copy of that statement throughout the community, a thing which he certainly would not have done had he wished to show himself amenable to instruction. From his attempt thus to spread broadcast his subversive doctrines it is clear that there is a whole group of people who are propagating these errors and who would be inter-

[30] Kolde has pointed this out, p. 61, note. The documents are in *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler" — Denck's view*, p. 235 *et seq.*, the theologians, p. 241 *et seq.*

ested in his defense. For this reason they have directed their reply to the Council instead of to Denck; the latter plan seemed merely a waste of time. If the Council so directs, however, they will continue their attempts to win him a better understanding. In case their efforts prove unavailing, it will then be the duty of the Council, by virtue of its office and its responsibility to God, to devise measures to prevent the further spread of this poisonous error among the people.[31]

There seems to have been no doubt in the minds of the members of the Council regarding the means which that body should employ to protect the community against the "poisonous error." On 21 January the banishment of Denck was decreed. The terms of this decree are interesting and instructive:

Since master Hans Denck, schoolmaster at St. Sebald's, has introduced several unchristian errors touching our holy faith, has propagated the same and attempted to defend them; since he has, in doing this, shown himself wholly stupid and contemptible before the theologians and doctors in the presence of the representatives of this Council; since he will accept no instruction from them by Scriptural proof, but rather trusts his own wilful head; and since he then submitted in writing his answer, not in clear form, but twisted and

[31] . . . so wirt als dan eurn E.w. vonn ambts und gottlicher ordnung wegen gepurn einsehen zu thun damit sie ir gifftig irthumb (das sie doch nicht unterlassen) nicht weiter unter das volck auspraitten. (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 242.)

involved, to the articles proposed to him: it is, therefore, to be understood that any further instruction in the Scripture will bear no fruit, and it is considered by this Council as scandalous, dangerous, and unchristian toward the community to tolerate such errors in this city and Christian community. And therefore, in view of the above-mentioned and other weighty reasons, this city and territory to the distance of ten miles is forbidden to the said Hans Denck.[32]

He was ordered to leave before night and not to return on pain of severe punishment.

Apparently dazed by the sharpness and suddenness of the blow, Denck obeyed the sentence without protest or delay. While comprehending only imperfectly the cause and feeling himself innocent of the charges brought against him, he none the less made no attempt to secure a reconsideration of the case.[33]

From the documents summarized above, it may be gathered that Denck was banished because he held and taught beliefs contrary to the Christian faith as understood by the theologians and by the members of the Council of Nuremberg who followed them. There is no indication in the records of his trial that he consciously attempted to undermine the power of the civil authority.[34] Denck's fault

[32] This decree is found in Keller, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer,* p. 249, and in Kolde, p. 62.

[33] Kolde, p. 63 and Denck's letter to Augsburg, in Keller, *ibid.,* p. 250.

[34] Two or three passages might be construed to indicate that the Council feared sedition. The painters, whose trial

was of a purely spiritual nature, the punishment for which, as Luther had warmly insisted but little more than a year earlier, belonged to God alone.[35]

The charges brought against the painters, in so far as they had to do with the denial of the civil power, were somewhat more serious.[36] On 16 January they were examined, the interrogation falling under six heads: (1) whether they believed in God; (2) what they believed concerning the nature of Christ; (3) whether the holy evangel and Word of God are comprised in Scripture; (4) concerning the nature of the Eucharist; (5) concerning baptism; (6) whether they believed in the civil power and recognized the Council of Nuremberg as ruler of their lives, property and externals [was

will be discussed in the following pages, were accused of sedition. In the "Gutachten" of the preachers regarding Denck, they use the word *sie* (they) referring apparently to Denck and the painters. Denck himself speaks of the "gefangene Brüder" and Sebald Behaim speaks of Denck as one of the men to whom he had expressed his "Mangel." These instances may go to show that in the thought of the authorities Denck was guilty of sedition, or at least that his teaching would lead to sedition. On the other hand, the charge is nowhere made against him and the theologians even go so far as to say that Denck has never denied the authority of the civil power. The conclusion seems irresistible that Denck was tried and banished simply for religious error wilfully persisted in.

[35] *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit,* W. A., 11, p. 245 *et seq.*

[36] On 12 January it was ordered that they be held in captivity, two days later they were to be examined in the torture-chamber (but not under torture) concerning their beliefs relative to the civil power and regarding their associates. (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 230.)

eusserlich ist]. Their replies to these questions indicate the unformed and somewhat bizarre ideas of this group of young artists and show how dangerous their theories might be deemed to established faith and civic order. The first question they answered in the affirmative; the questions regarding Scripture, Christ, Eucharist, baptism, they answered equivocally; to the last question they returned a flat negative.[37]

It is not necessary to go further into the details of the trial of these painters. It was suspended on 18 January until the charges against Denck could be disposed of finally. The minutes of the Council for 23 January contain a record to the effect that the preachers were to examine each man separately on 25 January.[38] The following day the Council decided to seek advice from the preachers, together with three jurists (Scheurl, Protz, and Marstaller), regarding the measures which should be taken in dealing with them.[39] The same day the reply of

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 245. (1) Ja, (2) halt nichts von Christo, (3) wisz nit obs heilig sey, (4) halt nichts davon, (5) nichts, (6) neyn. These were the answers of the Behaim brothers. Pentz was slightly more moderate in his reply to the sixth question — " wisz von keynem hern dann allein von Got." This, after all, when one allows for the bias of the examiners and of the scribe who wrote down the jottings, is not so different from the answer of the Provosts of St. Sebald and St. Lorenz to the Bishop of Bamberg on 12 Sept., 1524, when they said they had no lord but God and refused to recognize the authority of the Bishop. (Strobel, Bk. III, Pt. II, p. 59.)

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 242.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 247.

this committee of theologians and jurists was debated before the Council. The report of this debate shows that all were agreed that the painters were guilty of blasphemy and opposition to the civil power.[40]

The preachers, basing their argument on Scripture, urged that stringent measures be taken against them. They had tried to spread their error; they had refused all instruction until a sullen assent had been wrung from them, after two weeks of imprisonment had rendered them more amenable to reason. But such a confession amounts to little. One of their number had been heard to remark, "Plenty of talk, but no proof."[41] Unless they were to experience a thorough conversion, it would be necessary to excommunicate them. With this the civil power might well be satisfied, and bear with them if they would at all listen to instruction. There would remain, however, the danger that their error might be spread further and cause tumult and bloodshed before the magistrates could learn of it. Such an outcome would redound greatly to the discredit of the gospel; the advance of God's truth would be seriously hindered; the devil would again be set up in place of God. The suggestion of the

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 247 *et sqq.*

[41] Sebald Behaim had, however, expressed entire readiness to be instructed (*ibid.*, p. 244) and the professions of conversion made by all of them seem to have satisfied the jurists (p. 248). One wonders if considerable animus did not enter into this statement of the preachers.

preachers was, therefore, that the civil power should follow the lead of the Church and banish them from the city.

The jurists differed with the theologians in regard to the penalty to be imposed. There was no question, they said, that imperial law gave the right to banish all those who abandoned the true faith. But, on the other hand, it was also true that some of the followers of Arius, when they acknowledged their error, were not banished. In their judgment the painters had been sufficiently punished by their two weeks of imprisonment. Let them be further instructed; let the people be cautioned by the preachers against falling into such errors. In case they persist in their error, the Council will then have a free hand to act as it sees fit.

To this judgment of the jurists the theologians objected on the ground that it would mean coercion of belief. While these men had been labored with in prison in regard to their errors, it was not at all to compel them to conform, but merely to instruct them. If they were to be permitted to remain in the community, but forced to conform, that would be compulsion in matters of belief. Such compulsion is unjustifiable.[42] Moreover, if they were al-

[42] It will be noted that the jurists conceived of the action to be taken by the Council as punishment for past offences, the theologians as a means of protecting the community from dangerous propaganda. The civil power must not exert compulsion in matters of faith, but it is its duty to protect the faithful from contamination.

lowed to remain in the community, they would jeopardize the faith of others. The times and the temper of the people were to be considered rather than precedent. Expediency therefore demanded their expulsion from the community.

The arguments of the preachers seemed to the Council conclusive; the painters were immediately banished.[43] Several others, who had been arrested on suspicion of heterodox opinions, were at the same time released after having proved amenable to instruction.[44]

Thus the curtain falls on the first act of the drama enacted in Nuremberg between those who stood for the authority of the Evangelical Church and those who stood for the freedom of the individual in matters pertaining to his relations with his God. It is not here a question of attempting to justify one or the other side of the controversy, or to pronounce moral judgment upon conflicting ideas involved, though one may or may not approve of

[43] Kolde, p. 69, and *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 250. The arguments of the preachers are to be found summarized under six heads. *Ibid.*, p. 249 *et seq.*

[44] These were Sebald Baumhauer, probably son of the vestryman of St. Sebald's, whose beliefs were much akin to Denck's (*ibid.*, p. 245); Veit Wirsperger, who apparently was implicated by Sebald Behaim (*ibid.*, p. 244, "veyt glasers sone"), but who testified against the Behaim brothers (*ibid.*, p. 246); Ludwig Krueg (*ibid.*, p. 246); Cunz Kobalt (Kolde, p. 66, note 1); Caspar Korn (Kolde, p. 66, note 2). Concerning Sebald Baumhauer see Keller, *Die Waldenser und die Bibelübersetzungen*, p. 34 *et seq.*, and Kolde, in *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 1887, p. 12 *et sqq.*

methods employed. The quarrel was between two mutually antagonistic ideals, the fundamental question at issue being the right and the competence of the individual to choose freely for himself in matters of faith.

It may be well to recapitulate briefly the points at issue. On what grounds did the civil authorities proceed against these first radicals? The charge brought against Greiffenberger was that he was in error concerning certain articles of faith, and that he was inducing others to form a new sect. Osiander's opinion at that time was that such errors were to be combated by the Word of God alone, unless the community was endangered by them. The purport of his language seemed to be that a situation might arise in which the civil power should act. The question of when this point should be reached seems to be one merely of expediency. Against Denck also there was no indication of any charge other than error in religious belief, wilfully persisted in and taught to others. His accusers even take the trouble to point out that he has never "refused his obligation and oath to the temporal ruler." [45] They therefore see in the fact that he was considered the prime mover in the radical propaganda no hint of any direct blow at the power of the state. The case of the painters is somewhat different; new issues are here raised. They were

[45] *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 250.

accused of having had dealings with Reinhart; [46] with having gone about with Münzer's and Karlstadt's books in their possession; [47] with having carried on active propaganda not only in Nuremberg but in the surrounding territory; [48] with error in belief wilfully persevered in; and with denial of the civil power. Specifically the charge was blasphemy and sedition. A careful reading of the documents reveals clearly the fact that the consideration which bulked most largely in the minds of their accusers, of the theologians who examined them, and of the Council that sentenced them, was that they were undermining the religious doctrines that were dominant in Nuremberg at that time, and were spreading their dangerous beliefs among the people. "The new gospel will be brought to shame," was the cry of the preachers.[49] There still exist the arguments, drawn up under six heads, showing why, in the opinion of the ministers, these painters should not be allowed to remain in the city.[50] These arguments emphasize almost wholly the fact that the painters were spreading errors which involve the soul's salvation, and not merely temporal affairs.[51] The jurists do not seem to have

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 246 and note 2.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 246.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 237.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 248.
[50] "Ursachen warumb es beschwerlich sey, die drey maler hie In der Statt zu gedulden." (*Ibid., p. et seq.*) This is written in the hand of Spengler but drawn up very evidently by the theologians. (*Ibid.*, p. 249, note.)
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

considered the revolt against the civil power as serious enough to be worth mentioning — at least no record of their having discussed the point has been preserved.[52]

This argument is further strengthened by other direct testimony. Scheurl, who was one of the jurists called upon to assist in the examination, wrote on 22 January to a friend in Genoa. In this letter he makes the following statement: "Everything is quiet here in Germany except that the followers of Karlstadt are increasing. These deny that the body of Christ is in the host and combat the baptism of infants. They destroy the images and interpret Scripture for themselves. But this poison is no longer being spread abroad among us; three painters have been thrown into jail."[53] It is significant that Scheurl says not a word about their denial of the civil power. The documents relating to the trial are docketed in a contemporary hand, thus: "Investigation and examination instituted by the Council in the case of the brothers Sebald and Barthel Behaim and Georg Pentz, painters, and several other persons, in matters concerning our holy faith; and the answers given to the same. For this reason the two Behaims and Pentz were placed in prison."[54] Here again the writer considers that

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 248.

[53] Scheurl, *Briefbuch* II, p. 132. The fact that Karlstadt had been banished from Saxony would probably tend to justify, in the eyes of the orthodox Evangelicals, the banishment of his followers from Nuremberg.

[54] *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 243, note 2.

it is entirely a question of "holy faith." And Melanchthon, referring to this incident some years later, says that the painters were banished because they voiced erroneous religious beliefs; [55] and he commends the Council for such action.

It is well not to minimize unduly the question of sedition. There was much social unrest in Nuremberg at this time. There was a general disregard of law and order attendant upon the upsetting of established religious custom.[56] The peasant uprisings which were just beginning to agitate the Swabian and Franconian lands were doubtless increasing the anxiety of the Council to guard against anything that had the slightest appearance of radical disturbance. State and Church were not then such separate entities as we have come to consider them; their functions were by no means so clearly defined, the limits of state jurisdiction not so carefully marked out. The theologians were quite certain that the teaching of religious doctrines other than those authorized would inevitably lead to sedition.[57] But after making all due allowance it seems just to insist upon the point here taken. There are those who would maintain that Lutheran states at-

[55] *Prolegomena in officia Ciceronis,* C. R. XVI, c. 572 Melanchthon is here maintaining that faith should be free, but that the outward expression of that faith should be controlled by the civil power. As he wrote this in 1546 his ideas may have been much colored by later theories. Too much weight may not be given it. *Cf.* Keller, *Staupitz,* p. 237.

[56] *Cf.* Kolde, p. 51 *et seq;* Janssen II, p. 350 *et sqq.*

[57] *Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 248.

tacked radicalism not at all in defense of religion, but in maintenance of their own existence as political states.[58] Such a stand is contradicted by the considerations enumerated above.

A further examination of the evidence will reveal other factors. In every case the theologians not only discussed the doctrinal points at issue, but suggested the action to be taken by the Council. Osiander in his statement regarding Greiffenberger advised that, since he was ready to be instructed, it would be better to allow him to go unpunished than for the civil authorities to take action in such a matter.[59] As we have already seen, his advice was followed by the Council. In the case of Denck it was the theologians who not only advised drastic action but strongly urged it upon the Council. It is the duty of the Council, they said, by virtue of its office and because of its responsibility for the welfare of the community to take effective measures to halt the spread of this poisonous error.[60]

[58] Kawerau, in reviewing Wappler's works in the *Deutsche Literatur-Zeitung,* insists that the civil power acted against the "Anabaptists" only in self-protection, not because the Church demanded it or Luther taught it. (Issue of 28 Nov., 1914.)

[59] "Nun dieweil nicht allein als kunftig zu besorgen sondern auch schon vor augen ist, das ander mer in solchen irthumb kommen bedenkt mich besser, soferne E.w. Rhat nicht ander ursach wider in hett, das man in (doch bessers rhats unverziehen) seiner besserung geniessen liesz, dan es mocht uns einer der also geirret und doch von hertzen widerkeret, nutzer sein zum exempel solcher irrthumb, dann zehen die darin beharreten, und von der obrigkeit gestraft wurden." (Kolde, App. II, p. 31.)

[60] *Cf.* above, p. 81.

What these measures should be the Council was left to decide. But that body seems to have been in little doubt as to the course which it should pursue. What was evidently in the minds of the preachers at that time is made clear in the trial of the painters. Here the theologians asked not merely that some action be taken, they demanded very definite action for a very definite offense. These men were guilty of the most fearful blasphemy.[61] For this reason they were to be expelled from the Church, and their banishment was urged upon the Council.[62] It is true that for centuries blasphemy had been a crime punishable by civil authorities. The jurists pointed out that imperial law gave the right to punish, but they were not prepared to make use of it in this case. Furthermore, the crime of these painters was much more nearly heresy for which, Luther taught, there should be no civil pen-

[61] ". . . wüe abtrünige oder gotsverlaugner sint. . . ." "Nu haben dise maler iren irthumb . . . ausgegossen, das mit eynem trütz beharret, und Gott und sein wort veracht (?) also die hohst gotslesterung geubt. . . ." (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 247.)

[62] Nun hab die kirch, das ist die versamlung bey der apostel zeiten, so eyner apostatirt, inen auch nit sogleich wider angenomen, sonder ein zeitlang aus der gemeyn gelassen und gesehen, wie er sich gehalten. Dieweil dann bey disem, wue dise person in der stat pleiben solten, vil ubels mag kumen, und sie doch draussen auch so wol, als hie entweder in besserung oder aber uff verhertung ine straff kümen mogen, rathen sy, die theologen, einmütiglich, das ein erber rath ir straff nit dahinden lassen; dann, ob sich eyner bekene, hab er die kirchen wol genüg gethan, damit hab er aber dannocht die oberkeit nit bezalt und darumb soll man sy der stat verweysen. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p. 248).

alty. Luther was appealed to in the case under discussion and replied that he did not consider the painters blasphemers, but rather Turks or apostate Christians with whom the civil power had nothing to do.[63] But the theologians of Nuremberg had given the word a wider content than Luther was yet ready to give it. It was to maintain purity of faith and to guard the community from error that the Council was to take action. Here, then, the theologians definitely called upon the civil magistrates to act in the service of religion, naming the crime and prescribing the punishment.

This is the first instance in which the civil power was called upon to protect the Evangelical faith on the ground that it was the duty of the state to guard against the spread of error.[64] Its significance

[63] Luther to Spengler, 4 Feb., 1525. (Enders, 5, p. 117.) This question of blasphemy, as the crime for which the sectaries were put out of the way by the civil power, will be discussed in its broader aspects in the following chapter.

[64] Münzer and Karlstadt had been driven out of Saxony a few months earlier than this. But the charge against them was incitement to sedition rather than erroneous doctrine. In his *Brief an den Fürsten zu Sachsen von dem aufrührischen Geist* (W. A., 15, 211 *et sqq.*) Luther urges (212 *et seq.*) that his princes should give careful consideration to this matter and by virtue of their duty as wielders of "ordentlicher Gewalt" should guard against such disorder and put a stop to sedition. But he urges in the same letter that in the realm of the spirit, in matters that concern religious teaching, the civil power must not enter. Let them preach as they will and against whom they will. The Word of God must contend here (p. 218). In a letter of 27 Sept. (Enders, 5, p. 26), he advises that Karlstadt be removed from Orlamünde and the Saale Valley, but here again he assumes to be contending against sedition.

is therefore great. The immediate effect in Nuremberg was to make evident the need of a more definite organization of reform.[65] The Council provided that early in March a conference should be held at which the two parties — Catholics and Lutherans — might uphold their respective faiths

The distinction is, however, very close. Luther could also employ force to abolish the Catholic mass at Wittenberg, but that is "ordentliche Gewalt" (W. A., 18, p. 22). For the whole question, which has been the occasion of much controversy, see Barge, *Karlstadt,* II, chap. IX. On p. 38 he says: "Ein erstes Mal wurde zum Schutze der reinen Lehre die Polizeigewalt mobil gemacht." Wappler (*Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* p. 13) follows him in this. Müller in his *Luther und Karlstadt* (chap. VI) takes issue with this point of view, insisting that it is for sedition and not on the ground of wrong teaching that Luther would have the latter proceeded against. On the whole, I think he makes his point, though I agree with Köhler, who reviews the controversy in the *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* (1912, no. 9), that it is very finely drawn. It is chiefly a distinction without a difference and is of importance only in the discussion of Luther's developing theory of persecution.

While these events were transpiring at Nuremberg, the Council at Zürich decreed banishment as the penalty for refusal to have infants baptized. (Egli, *Aktenstücke,* no. 622, 18 Jan., 1525.) But no action was taken against the "Anabaptists" till some time later. (*Cf.* Burrage, *The Anabaptists in Switzerland.*)

[65] See letter of Council to John Poliander, 25 Feb., 1525. Complaint is there made of the "allerley ungleicher predig — aus dem bey unserer gemein sich taglich unschickligkeitten und Irrungen im gewissen ereugen wollen, und alls zu besorgen von tagen zu tagen noch mehr erweittern möchten, derhalben wir auch christennlicher gutter maynung und aus verpflichtung unnser oberkeit unnd ambts furgenommen haben, die predicanten in solchen iren predigen sovil moglich zuverainigen und dem unfall so vermutlich hieraus volgen mag stattlich zu begegnen." Pub. by Schornbaum in *B. B. K. G.,* 6, p. 225.

in debate. It then declared that the Evangelical party had won. The break with the old Church was now made complete and final. From this time on unity, in the outward confession of faith at least, was to be enforced; and Luther, writing to his prince in February of the following year, could cite the example of Nuremberg in behalf of his claim that it is the duty of a prince to see to it that in his domains but one single faith is propagated.[66] In this Nuremberg anticipated the action later to become general in all Lutheran lands. One sees here the beginning of the well-known principle — *cuius regio, eius religio.*

These trials were pregnant with meaning also for the later history of the sects. Though Denck was guilty of no revolt against the civil power, the report was quickly disseminated that he had taught sedition and was for this reason banished from Nuremberg.[67] The more revolutionary theories of the painters became noised about and these were ascribed to Denck.[68] The incident would probably

[66] Erlangen, 53, p. 368. The Council immediately assumed the prerogative of appointing pastors. They, therefore, had an effective means at hand for maintaining unity of faith.

[67] Letter of Denck to the Council of Augsburg. Pub. in Keller, *Ein Apostel de Wiedertäufer,* p. 250. Denck did later come to the more common "Anabaptist" view regarding the civil power as documents edited by Schwabe in Z. K. G., vol. 12, p. 477 *et sqq.,* show. But even in these utterances Denck takes much the same stand as did Luther in his *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit.*

[68] Luther to Brisman, 4 Feb., 1525. (Enders, 5, p. 118.) Capito to Zwingli, 5 Feb., 1525. (C. R. XCV, p. 302.)

have been forgotten had it not been for the prominent part which he played in the later development of the whole sectarian movement. He was known as the "bishop" of the "Anabaptists."[69] And as the news spread that he was propagating seditious and revolutionary views, the majority saw in all propaganda in opposition to the state's religion an attack upon the state itself.[70] This idea, once in the minds of men in authority, was greatly furthered by the peasants' revolt and the rapid spread of the "Anabaptist" movement during the years 1526 and 1527. All dissent, were it never so harmless, came to be connected with revolt against civil authority. Sectaries were seditious folk preaching bloodshed, the overthrowing of all government, the sweeping away of the whole social, political, and religious structure of society. And as the narrowing and hardening of Lutheranism drove an increasing number into opposition, it became the professed duty of the state to hunt them down as outlaws.

[69] Franck, *Geschichtsbibel,* p. cccxi (a).
[70] Keller, *Staupitz,* p. 237 and *passim.*

Chapter IV

LUTHER AND DISSENT

The ideas of Hans Denck, in their general purport as least, seem much more nearly akin to the earlier utterances of Luther than do those of the Lutheran theologians who demanded his expulsion from Nuremberg. But the Wittenberg master, too, had changed since the first years of his revolt, and since he played such a dominant rôle in the Evangelical movement it seems pertinent, for the elucidation of our problem, to follow in some detail the development of his thought regarding dissent.

In discussing Luther's theory certain considerations must be borne constantly in mind — his conception of the absolute oneness of truth, his belief in exclusive salvation, his reverence for authority, and the external conditions of his revolt. It is impossible to understand utterances which seem quite contradictory until one attempts to approach, from his point of view, the problems which he faced. For Luther, from the beginning to the end of his revolt, believed that truth was revealed by God through the pages of a sacred book and therefore fixed for all time; he insisted that the Holy Spirit,

who interprets to men the Word of God through Scripture, gives but one interpretation. Granting these premises there was no possibility of two men disagreeing honestly over a question of faith. To presume to differ from the dictates of authority was to him unthinkable — provided that authority was of God and not of Satan. From the Bible and from the early Fathers one could learn the will of God, all else was simply idle tradition of men. Greater, said Augustine, is the authority of a single Scripture than all the powers of the human reason.[1]

Starting with the premises from which Luther started, there is no choice but to demand tolerance for oneself and one's own beliefs, while at the same time demanding repression of all that is antagonistic to that viewpoint. Augustine, Luther's great master, had frankly held that the duty of the non-Christian ruler is tolerance, the duty of the Christian ruler intolerance.[2] And nowhere did Luther, in his reasoned thought, ever advance beyond this viewpoint, much as his theory as to the means to be employed may have changed. It is necessary, therefore, in reading his utterances regarding repression always carefully to note which way he is facing. It is impious persecution to repress one who holds to the true Word of God; it is fulfilling

[1] Enders, 3, p. 132 (28 Apr., 1521).

[2] See his answer to Petilian, the Donatist, and his treatise on the correction of the Donatists. Tr. by J. R. King in Schaff's *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. LV, pp. 584, 635, 638, 642, 644.

one's high duty to God to put down that which is contrary to that Word.[3]

The circumstances of Luther's revolt brought him immediately into opposition to all the then existing external authority, both of Church and State. But only reluctantly and step by step did he break with institutions for centuries revered. It was dissatisfaction with his life and the means of salvation offered him by the Church that drove him to a fresh study of the Scriptures from which he evolved his theory of justification by faith alone — a theory which soon brought him into sharp conflict with the Catholic hierarchy over the question of indulgences. Not until strife with papal legate and papal champion at Augsburg and at Leipzig showed him that he was hopelessly at variance with the leaders and dogmas of the Church, did he go into definite opposition. From a corrupt curia he appealed to the Pope, from the Pope ill informed to the Pope to be better informed, from the Pope to a Council, from the Council to the Word of God. Always as the defender of God's truth against abuse, error and false assumption, did he fight; always did he appear to himself, and to a great mass of the German people, as an upholder of the old faith, a champion of the pure apostolic Church. And when, in the "bonfire of Wittenberg," he burned papal bull and books of canon law, it was

[3] Letter to the "Propst, Domherren und Capitel in Wittenberg," 19 Aug., 1523. (Enders, 4, p. 210.)

not as a revolutionist but as a restorer of that which was old, a destroyer of the assumptions based upon false human traditions, that he stood before the world. He took his stand firmly upon the Word of God bound within the covers of a sacred book. In this he had the sense of absolute certainty that he was right.

"With what pains and labor, grounded ever in Holy Writ, have I succeeded in justifying my own conscience for presuming to stand out alone against the Pope, to hold him up as Antichrist, the bishops as his apostles, and the universities as his brothels. How often has my heart failed me, plagued me, cast up at me its one strongest argument — are you alone wise? Have all others erred this long while? What if you are wrong and are leading so many people off into the same error to be eternally damned? Finally, however, Christ strengthened me with his own true Word and confirmed me, so that my heart no longer racked me. But, as a rocky coast hurls back the breakers, it resisted these arguments of the papists and mocked their threats and assaults." [4]

He had his commission not from men but directly from God.

"Your worshipful Highness the Elector knows, or if he does not know, let it be hereby declared to him, that I have the gospel, not from men, but only from Heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ, so that I might very well have gloried in being, and written myself down as

[4] Letter to Augustinians at Wittenberg, Nov., 1521. (Erlangen, 53, pp. 93 *et seq.*)

a servant and evangelist, which I mean henceforth to do." [5]

Luther would be no heretic. "I offer every condition of peace," he wrote his friend Spalatin in 1520, "except that I will not recant, suffer the stigma of heresy, or give up the freedom of teaching the Word." [6] The Church had, in fact, never punished heretics. Those whom she had punished were saintly men.[7] Hus was burned at the stake, and yet we are all Hussites without knowing it — Staupitz, Augustine, even Paul himself. The true evangel has been openly and publicly burned this hundred years.[8] A heretic is "one who refuses to believe what is necessary and that which he is

[5] Quoted from Harnack, *History of Dogma*, VII, p. 172, note. This sureness of the absolute rightness of his position was shared by his followers. An interesting instance of this is found in the report of Erasmus Alberus regarding the conversion of Cellarius from Zwinglianism to Lutheranism. Cellarius had heard Œcolampadius pray "if our teaching is true." No Christian should so doubt his own faith, said Cellarius. Rather should he say, "Lord God, thou knowest that I preach thy Word and do not uphold false teaching." Cellarius, therefore, changed to Lutheranism, where he might be certain of his ground. (Enders, 2, p. 58, note 3.) The same certainty is seen in the "Protest" drawn up by the Evangelical states at the second Diet of Spires, 1529. They there insist that their faith is certain, being grounded upon the Word of God, while that of the Catholic party is built upon mere human tradition. *Cf.* letter to the Elector, 7 Mar., 1522 (Erlangen, 53, p. 110): "Denn ich weiss das mein wort und anfang nicht aus mir, sondern aus Gott ist, das mir kein Tod noch Verfolgung anders lehren wird, mich dünkt auch, man werde es müssen lassen bleiben."

[6] Enders, 2, p. 464 (23 Aug. 1520).

[7] *Cf.* Köhler, *Reformation und Ketzerprozess*, p. 9.

[8] Letter to Spalatin, Feb., 1520. (Enders, 2, p. 345.)

bidden to believe." [9] But what is it that one must believe? It is the Word of God.[10] The world can do no more than taunt us as heretics and unbelievers; it cannot make us heretics. When we build on the Word of God we may stand unshaken, confident in our rightness.[11] The Word makes gods of men as Jesus taught (John 10:35), and David also (Ps. 82); one who believes on that cannot go astray.[12]

The will of God will be perfectly plain to every honest man as soon as he has it brought properly to his attention. It is absurd to try by physical force to compel conformity to a certain set of dogmas. Heretics are to be overcome with books, not by force, else would the executioner be the most learned doctor of all.[13] It is interesting to note that Luther had not always thought thus. Before he broke with the Church he had openly advocated the suppression of heresy by force. But the exigencies of his revolt tended rather swiftly to modify this view. Discussing the 14th chapter of Luke in a sermon of the year 1522, he comments on the passage, "Compel them to enter in." What is meant, he asks, by compulsion in this case? It is to be understood in the sense of going to an erring

[9] W. A., 1, p. 391.
[10] Enders, 3, p. 141.
[11] Erlangen, 53, p. 94 (25 Nov., 1521).
[12] *Ibid.*, p. 121 (Mar., 1522).
[13] *Address to the German Nobility,* from the translation in Wace and Buchheim, p. 75.

brother, comforting him with the gospel, and telling him how he may become free from his sins through belief in Christ. "That is the meaning of *compelle intrare*. It is not to be understood in the sense of outward compulsion, as it is ordinarily interpreted and as *I also have done*, by which one drives knaves and evildoers by force. For that does no good and is also not the meaning of the gospel." Therefore one should deal with heresy as a matter of conscience.[14] One cannot guard against it by force. "It is a spiritual thing which one cannot cut with iron, burn with fire, or drown with water." God's Word must contend here, and when that can do nothing the civil power can do no good, though it fill the world with blood.[15]

The single rule that may be applied in the case of spiritual offenses is that laid down by Jesus in Matt. 18:15–17. First talk the matter over with an offending brother; if he refuses to listen to you, take it to the community of true believers, and if he refuses to be guided by them "let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican."[16] This does not mean that Luther had become any more tolerant. Heresy was to him still the deadliest of sins

[14] Burr, p. 720, note 7. The quotation is from W. A., 12, pp. 600 *et seq.* The sermon is here dated 14 June, 1523, but the editor, Pietsch, later corrects the date, holding that it must have been delivered in 1522. (See W. A., 11, p. 131.)

[15] *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit* (1523), W. A., 11, p. 268.

[16] *Die deutsche Messe* (1526), W. A., 19, p. 75. *Cf.* Wappler, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozess in Zwickau zur Reformationszeit*, p. 3.

and any infraction of the laws of God merited swift punishment.[17] It was, however, a thing too subtle to be dealt with by temporal weapons.

But, though his fundamental theory of revealed truth and exclusive salvation was essentially intolerant, his early enthusiasm and belief in human nature obscured for a time its real character. He was sure that all men would come to see the truth as he did. The stirring appeal in his *Address to the German Nobility* and in his essay on *Christian Liberty,* both written in 1520, seemed like the dawning of a new age. His claim that "we are all priests . . . and have all one faith, one gospel, one sacrament," and therefore have the power of discerning and judging right and wrong in matters of faith, sounded like a clarion call summoning all men to exercise the rights of the individual conscience.[18] His stand at Worms seemed to place the final capstone on the structure of liberty of conscience, in process of erection now these two hundred years.

But Luther demanded only freedom of conscience bound by the Word of God — for he knew no free-

[17] See his letter to Melanchthon, 9 Sept., 1521, in which he discusses the unpardonable sin. This, he thinks, is quite probably heresy. (Enders, 3, p. 227.) And see also his letter to the Chapter at Wittenberg cited above (note 4, p. 101) in which he says it is one thing to show tolerance toward the infirm in matters of no importance and a vastly different thing in important matters. In the latter case it is impious to be tolerant.

[18] *Address to the German Nobility,* Wace and Buchheim, p. 27.

dom else. This was the authority which he substituted for that of the Church. The Word of God may be found in Scripture as interpreted by the Holy Spirit, "that all-simplest writer," who gives but one interpretation.[19] Since this is true, it is unthinkable that anyone who honestly seeks the truth could arrive at any conclusions other than he has reached. All have the power of judging and should be restrained by no external authority, he said in 1520.[20] When, in 1522, the monastic foundation at Altenburg was opposing the installation of an Evangelical pastor in the parish in which it held the right of advowson, he insisted that it could not properly exercise any control over the community. It is for the latter to decide what is true teaching and to choose its own pastor. "If they (the members of the Chapter) try to say it is not proper for us to judge what is gospel truth on matters which have not been decided by a council, we will not grant their contention; for the Scripture gives not to a council, but to every Christian (I Cor. 14) the power to judge teaching, and to know and avoid the wolves (Matt. 7). It is not a question of what others decide, though they be angels. For each must believe for himself and know how to judge between true and false teaching." [21]

[19] *Auf das überchristlich, übergeistlich und überkünstlich Buch Bocks Emsers zu Leipzig Antwort* (1521). W. A., 7, p. 670.

[20] *Address to the German Nobility*, p. 27.

[21] Enders, 3, pp. 348 *et seq.* (28 Apr., 1522).

Such a position served admirably so long as Luther's assurance that all men would come to believe just as he did, were they but shown the right way, remained unshaken. But when that assurance was undermined, some theory by which men could be compelled to conform to the true faith, in outward worship at least, became necessary. The belief in exclusive salvation furnished the basis; his responsibility as the leader of the body of true believers afforded the occasion. He had always contended that all must fight against the abuses of the Roman hierarchy. No obedience to that authority was required for it could kill the soul as well as the body.[22] In his *Address to the German Nobility* he had called upon the princes to sweep away abuses in the Church. But their power was to end here; no positive task of organization was to be theirs. Such authority was to rest in the community of true believers. To the individual was to be given the right of judging between truth and falsehood; to the community, the right of controlling Christian worship.[23]

Luther in his belief in the competence of the individual to judge in matters of faith was to meet swift disappointment. Men proved to be stubborn

[22] See, for example, his letter to the Wittenbergers, Dec., 1521. (Erlangen, 53, pp. 101 *et seq.*)

[23] He develops this thought in the essay, *Dass ein christliche Versammlung oder Gemeine Recht und Macht habe, alle Lehre zu urtheilen und Lehrer zu berufen, ein und abzusetzen, Grund und Ursach aus der Schrift.* (W. A., 11, pp. 408 *et sqq.*)

and perverse; they were either unable or unwilling to see the truth. Early in 1522 he was called upon to meet a group who seemed earnest, and who apparently in all honesty thought they had a truth different from his. They thought that God spoke to them directly and thus revealed to them truths not contained in the Bible. These "prophets" came from Zwickau to Wittenberg and began voicing their prophetic utterances during the time that Luther was in hiding at the Wartburg. Greatly stirred, Luther, despite the injunctions of his prince, left his castle retreat and came to Wittenberg. After talking with the so-called prophets he quickly concluded that the spirit which motivated them was of Satan rather than of God. But mere certainty that they were wrong did not assure against the evil consequences of propaganda such as they were carrying on. People were being led astray, even from among his own followers at Wittenberg. Melanchthon was somewhat shaken; Karlstadt was swept completely off his feet. Down at Allstedt during the following year Münzer began to make trouble. There was growing danger from those who appealed, as did he, to the Word of God, but who had differing notions of that concept and differing interpretations of Scripture. The need of some fixed standard, of a norm by which men might know that they had the true faith, became increasingly apparent. Gradually, therefore, under the stress of attack from those who desired to carry

to greater lengths the revolt from authority, Luther shifted his ground. From the idea of the Word of God in Scripture, interpreted to the individual by the Holy Ghost, he came, by 1525, to look upon Scripture as the Word of God. Faith in God came to mean substantially the acceptance of Luther's interpretation of the Bible.[24]

With the erection of this external criterion of faith Luther turned inevitably to some power competent to unite discordant forces and bring unity and stability to his work. But where should he find this authority? The power of the ecclesiastical hierarchy he had shattered by his theory of the priesthood of all believers.[25] To the civil authorities he would, as we have seen, grant a negative power to suppress abuses, but none to compel uniformity. When dissent first began to raise its head, he maintained that the prince should not interfere. He was greatly exercised for fear that the Elector would, in his impatience, take drastic measures to quell the disturbances aroused by the "Zwickau prophets." "See to it," he wrote Spalatin, "that our prince does not soil his hands

[24] *Vom Greuel der Stillmesse,* W. A., 18, p. 23: "Aber zum ersten will ich synem iglichen des grunds erynnern, darauff unser glaube und alles, was wyr predigen, stehet, und denselben kurtzlich widderhalen. Ich predige aber itzt nur denen, die das Evangelion fur gottes wort und nicht andere halten, denn die noch dran zwayffeln oder nicht wissen, nemen solchen grund nicht an." *Cf.* also Jones, *Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries,* p. 12.

[25] Clearly expressed in his pamphlet of the year 1520, *On Christian Liberty.*

in the blood of these new Zwickau prophets." [26] A few weeks later he wrote to the Elector himself with reference to the same disturbance. "The gospel," he says, "has won a strong hold upon the common man. . . . But he does not know how to make proper use of it." It is useless, however, to attempt to employ force; it would merely cause bitterness and sedition. "I have recently learned that not only the ecclesiastical power but the civil power as well must give way before the gospel." [27]

The following year Luther published a careful work on the province of the civil power, indicating clearly over what sphere it was competent, in his judgment, to rule.[28] In this treatise he begins by laying down as a fundamental tenet the theory that the civil power is ordained of God and that every one should obey it.[29] But there are two classes of people in the world — the worldly and the other-worldly. The latter, since they belong to the kingdom of God over which Christ is lord, need no earthly law or temporal rulers. If all the people in the world were good Christians, there would be no need of prince, king, sword, or law. One might

[26] Enders, 3, p. 286 (17 Jan., 1522).

[27] Erlangen, 53, p. 111 (7 Mar., 1522).

[28] *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei.* W. A., 11, pp. 245–280. One must remember in reading this that Luther was not a political theorist but a theologian. It is well also to recall that he was just at this time much incensed because of the activity of some states in suppressing his writings.

[29] *Ibid.*, 11, p. 247.

as well pass laws that apple trees should bear apples rather than thorns as to decree that a Christian should do right.[30] Why then have laws? Because of the evil men in the world who will not do right except under compulsion. And since we are all children of sin, all need law and all should be obedient to the law. Else would some, under the cloak of needing no law, practice all sorts of knavery.[31]

"One must distinguish carefully between the two powers [the spiritual and the temporal] and must maintain both — the one that works for righteousness, the other that maintains peace and guards against evil deeds. Neither is sufficient without the other. For without Christ's spiritual power no one can become right with God through the earthly power. Likewise Christ's rule does not extend over all men. At all times the Christians are in the minority, and are mingled with the non-Christians." It is, therefore, to be concluded that both powers are necessary and complementary; the one ruling the spirit, the other the external life of man.[32]

But the civil power must see to it that it does not attempt to overstep its proper limits and tres-

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 249 *et seq.* This passage is of much interest in connection with the sectaries, against whom one of the chief charges was that they considered the civil power unnecessary, but said all men should obey it even though they were Christian. They, however, went further than Luther in that they maintained no Christian should hold office.

[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 250 *et seq.*

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

pass upon the powers and prerogatives belonging to God. "The worldly power has laws that reach no further than over one's body and property, and those things which are external. For over the soul God can and will allow no one but Himself to rule. Therefore when the civil power assumes to make laws for the soul, in such cases it trespasses upon God's power and merely leads astray and kills the soul." [33]

Into the province of the spirit, then, the civil power must not enter. It has its function which is a very high and necessary one. It is ordained of God to maintain peace and order. It is not the handmaiden of the spiritual authority to punish the violations of its laws. The two realms are distinct; they have bounds which must not be crossed.

To this idea Luther clung even after the radicals, especially Münzer, had caused no little trouble and heart-burning, not only for Luther but for his princes as well. Duke John Frederick wrote to him 24 June, 1524, complaining of the fanatics and urging Luther to make a tour of visitation through Thuringia in an attempt to quiet the disturbances. Such preachers as he found to be instilling radical and seditious doctrines he should, with the aid of the civil power, displace.[34] To this Luther replied in *Ein Brief an die Fürsten zu Sachsen von dem aufrührischen Geist*.[35] It has always been the rule,

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 262.
[34] Enders, 4, p. 357.
[35] W. A., 15, pp. 210–221. Also in Erlangen, 53, p. 225–

he says, when the Word of God waxes strong, for Satan to strive against it with all his power, at first with fists and violence, later by a false tongue and erroneous teaching. Thus he filled the world full of sects and heretics. This is unavoidable. In so far as they stir up sedition and attempt anything against the civil power — and that seems to be their purpose — it is the duty of the magistrate to guard carefully against their machinations.[36] But in so far as teaching is concerned, it is not for the civil power to intervene in behalf of God's Word. "Let them just preach confidently and vigorously whatever they may and against whom they will. For, as I said above, there must be sects. The Word must take the field and do battle. . . . If their spirit is true, it will not be afraid of us and will persist; if ours is true, it will not need to fear them or anyone else. Simply let the spirits fight it out among themselves. If a few are led astray thereby, what of it? So it goes in war. Where a fight is on some must always be wounded and fall."[37] If they persist in seditious acts, they should be expelled from the territory.[38] "But I pray you that you give careful consideration to this fanaticism, that, as befits Christians, these matters may be settled by

268. The latter dates this letter, 21 August, but it must have been written the latter part of July. See Enders, 4, p. 373, note 1 and Introduction in W. A., 15.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 212 *et seq.*

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 218 *et seq.*

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 219.

the Word of God alone, and that cause of sedition, for which Mr. Everybody [*Herr Omnes*] is all too ready, may be guarded against." [39]

But already another spirit was striving in Luther. During the years 1523–1524 he was in a continual wrangle with the canons at Wittenberg, chiefly over the question of private masses. He threatened and bullied them; they appealed to the Elector. Luther told them that the prince had no authority in such cases.[40] The Elector thought otherwise and attempted to secure some compromise by which peace might be established.[41] Luther insisted that no pressure could force him to cease preaching against private masses, but that he would give no cause for tumult or disturbance; it was not his intention to employ force.[42] Finally, however, his conscience would not permit him to allow such "idolatrous" rites to be longer observed; [43] so, despite his previous assurances to the Duke, he got his Wittenberg followers together and put a stop to them by force.[44]

His action raised much protest. The Catholics accused him of sedition, and Luther found himself hard pressed to justify his action. This he did in his work *Vom Greuel der Stillmesse*. The Papists,

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 220 *et seq.*

[40] Erlangen, 53, p. 179.

[41] Enders, 5, p. 54, note; C. R., L, c. 619 *et sqq.*

[42] Enders, 4, p. 208.

[43] Erlangen, 53, p. 178. *Cf.* also p. 270.

[44] In the Introduction to *Vom Greuel der Stillmesse* (W. A., 18, pp. 8 *et sqq.*) the sources for this whole incident are carefully reviewed. *Cf.* Burr, *Anent the Middle Ages*, p. 722.

he said, accused him of raising sedition, but such charges are to be expected from people who blaspheme God with their masses and idolatry. "I consider it no sedition when one takes cognizance of and rights something by a proper use of force." [45] These people could easily have learned better, had they not closed their ears to all true teaching. They were mingling with the true believers in Wittenberg, and as a result, according to the teachings of Paul (Rom. 1:32), their sin would be visited upon the whole community should they be allowed to persist in their blasphemous practices.[46]

It is, therefore, according to Luther's theory, necessary to employ force for the suppression of blasphemy and idolatry, that the judgment of God be not visited upon the community which permits them. Coercion is not, it must be clearly understood, to be applied by the hand of the prince. It seems rather to be an extension of the theory that the Christian community should purge itself by the expulsion of its wilful members. In this case it was the Evangelical community which drove out its Catholic opponents. From this position it is but a short step to the employment of force by the

[45] W. A., 18, p. 22.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 23 *et seq.* It is of interest to contrast this with his stand in an early debate with Cochlæus at Worms. At that time he urged that wheat and tares should be permitted to grow up together. (Reported by Cochlæus. Enders, 3, p. 176.)

prince, as the chief member of the Christian community, for the protection of the faithful in his territories. It was not long before that step was to be taken.

The movement inaugurated by Luther had passed the irresponsible propagandist stage. He now found himself the responsible head of a great institution for which he must devise some sort of organization, if the gains already made were to be conserved and disintegrating forces suppressed. He must unite with forces powerful enough to aid him in combating both conservative and radical. For he was still a man of the Middle Ages in his notion of the *Corpus Christi,* one and indivisible. True, he had already caused a division in that body of Christ, but he always stoutly maintained that his was the true Church and had not ceased to hope that all men would see the truth as he saw it. He steadfastly clung to the idea of the unity of the Church and, when he saw that unity being endangered, he turned to the only power which he could command and invoked it against the forces that were threatening his system. The territorial prince was to become the guardian of unity and the protector of the faithful. Into his hands must be put weapons with which to perform his duty.

Two events occurred which hastened this change. The peasants' revolt destroyed in Luther the last vestige of faith in the "common man." Grown

skeptical of the latter's ability to form self-controlling religious communities, he now became sure that organization must be from above. Just at this time also his cautious prince, Frederick, died and was followed on the electoral throne by his brother John. Less able than his brother, Duke John was, however, far more active in support of Luther and his cause. Opportunity was thus offered for a more aggressive policy of reform.

Luther was not slow to grasp the opportunity. It has been shown that, by the end of 1524, he was already prepared to employ "ordentlicher Gewalt" for the suppression of the papal "blasphemies and idolatries." But he was not then ready to call upon the prince for aid in such action. In April of the following year he urged in his *Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die zwolf Artikel der Bauernschaft in Schwaben* that "it is not the province of the civil power to prevent anyone teaching or believing as he wills, whether it be gospel truth or lies; it is sufficient if it prevent the teaching of sedition and tumult." [47] But since it became increasingly apparent that some central control was necessary to enforce uniformity in religious teaching and practice, and since Luther was now able to count upon the active support of his prince, he evolved, during the summer and fall of 1525, a theory whereby the prince was made responsible for the enforcement of the first as well

[47] W. A., 18, p. 299.

as the second table of the Mosaic Law; man's relations to God as well as man's relations with man were henceforth to be subject to his control.

In a sermon on the second commandment, delivered in October, Luther showed clearly in what direction his thought was tending.[48] There are, he said, two ways in which the second commandment may be broken. The first and most common infraction is swearing, cursing or other open dishonoring of God's name. The second is more subtle and so much more serious than the first that there can be no comparison of the two. This blasphemy consists in preaching and teaching in the name of God, and with great show of piety, empty works of the devil.[49] The Pope is the greatest transgressor of all. He is steeped in this blasphemy since he commands in the name of God that which is contrary to the will of God.[50] Heretics also have thus in the past misused the name of God — Arians, Manicheans, Pelagians, and all others who have taught like doctrines.[51] And the sects which are at present stirring up trouble imagine that they have the true Word of God; it is nothing but blasphemy, however, and they must fall.[52] "You have, then, the two trespasses against this command-

[48] W. A., 16, pp. 464–477. This sermon was delivered probably on 22 October.

[49] *Ibid.*, p. 466 *et seq.*

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 467.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 466.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 466 *et seq.*

ment: the first open and common . . . everyone understands it; the civil authorities punish it . . . the second is more subtle; it has the appearance of honoring God, as in the case of the false teachers and those who accept their doctrines. These dishonor the name of God and he will punish both, — send them both to the devil." [53] It should be noted also that false worship, as well as false teaching, constitutes blasphemy according to the theory which Luther here propounds.[54]

The implication in this sermon is that the second breach of this commandment is not to be punished by the civil authorities. Preachers must contend in this field, says Luther. "It is the greatest and most difficult work of this commandment that one defend the holy name of God against all who misuse it in a spiritual sense, and publish it abroad among all men. For it is not enough that I for myself and in myself call upon and praise the name of God in joy and sorrow, I must also go forth and for the honor and name of God incur the enmity of all men, as Christ said to his disciples, 'all men will despise thee for my name's sake.' [55] For this we must have the name of opposing authority, both ecclesiastical and civil, and be accused of disobedience." [56] The same idea is expressed by Melanchthon in his *Judicium de jure reformandi.* Preachers are bound to punish misuse of the name of God,

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 470.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 476.
[55] *Ibid.*, p. 472.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 473.

which consists, he affirms, in wrong teaching and false worship.[57]

In these utterances there is no insistence upon the duty of the government to enter the lists in behalf of true teaching and worship.[58] A very different impression may, however, be gathered from Luther's letters of the same period. "Doctor Martin also says," wrote Spalatin to the Elector, "that your Highness should by no means permit anyone longer to carry on the unchristian ceremonies or to reinstate them."[59] And a few weeks later Luther wrote to Spalatin as follows: "In regard to your question whether the prince should suppress abominations . . . [I reply] no one ought to be compelled to faith or the gospel. For there is no precedent for this. The prince has the right to rule in external matters alone. . . . The prince should suppress open crime such as perjury, manifest blasphemy of the name of God and the like. . . . I believe the example of Christ, when he made a whip and drove the merchants and money-changers from the temple by force, is sufficient warrant."[60] There is to be no compulsion to faith, but manifest blasphemies are to be suppressed by the prince;

[57] Pub. in C. R. I, c. 765. It was written late in 1525. *Cf.* Burr, p. 722 and note 11.

[58] *Cf.* C. R., I, c. 769 *et seq.*, where is urged the duty of the prince to *permit* the institution of changes in teaching and forms of worship.

[59] Printed in Kolde, *Friedrich der Weise*, p. 72 (1 Oct., 1525).

[60] Enders, 5, p. 271 *et seq.* Letter of 11 Nov., 1525.

and false teaching is manifest blasphemy. The undoubted purport of these letters, meant for the eye of the Elector, is that the prince is now responsible for the punishment of both breaches of the second commandment.

Important for the understanding of Luther's theory of repression of the sectaries is a clear comprehension of the content of the word blasphemy as he came to employ it. In the Middle Ages it had meant wanton insult to the name of God. In its worst form it was the most heinous of sins, and as such was punishable by death under imperial law. But Luther gave it a far wider meaning. At the beginning of his revolt he used the word loosely to designate any teaching contrary to his own. Thus the contentions of Eck at the Disputation of Leipzig were heretical and blasphemous;[61] the "Zwickau prophets" were blasphemers;[62] Emser was guilty of blasphemy, evidently because he wrote bitter diatribes attacking Luther.[63] Works blaspheme the grace of God, to whom alone it belongs to justify and save through faith.[64] The worst blasphemers are those who pride themselves on the law, but do not keep it.[65] Most ecclesiastics teach wrong doctrine and misuse their ecclesiastical power; against such blasphemers something must be done

[61] *Ibid.*, 2, p. 113.
[62] *Ibid.*, 3, p. 320.
[63] *Ibid.*, 4, p. 329.
[64] *On Christian Liberty*, Wace and Buchheim, p. 123.
[65] *Von den guten Werken*, W. A., 6, p. 219.

for the honor of God.[66] The sectaries think they have the true spirit of Christ, but this is nothing else than blasphemy.[67]

From these illustrations one may see the direction in which Luther's thought is tending. As more and more the stress of conflict forces hypothesis into the position of proved truth, rhetoric becomes sober earnest. One may not punish for heresy; a man must be allowed to believe as he will, but the outward expression of erroneous belief must be punished as blasphemy by the civil power.[68] Of significance for this changing point of view is his letter to Spengler, early in 1525, regarding the radicals of Nuremberg. He does not consider them blasphemers, but rather as "Turks" or "apostate Christians," whom it was not the province of the civil power to punish.[69] His letter to Brismann on the same subject indicates somewhat the limits which he would then put upon the definition of the word. Judging from this letter, the crimes with which the painters were charged — denial of Christ, of the Word of God, of baptism and the Eucharist

[66] W. A., 6, p. 228.

[67] W. A., 16, p. 469 *et seq.*

[68] *Cf.* his letter of later date (26 Aug., 1529) to Thos. Loscher. (Enders, 7, p. 150.)

[69] Enders, 5, p. 117. It will be remembered that the Council of Nuremberg had already proceeded against them as *blasphemous* and seditious. Blasphemy, as there defined, consisted in denial of God and his Word, and obstinate clinging to error. (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 246.)

— do not constitute blasphemy.[70] But before the year was out, as we have seen, he was ready to pronounce as blasphemy erroneous teaching. And in his *Judicium de jure reformandi* Melanchthon, leaning on Luther, names five things which are manifest blasphemies of the name of Christ — to teach that we are sanctified by works, that the mass purifies those for whom it is held, that monastic life is the most holy, that one should invoke the saints, that the grace of the saints avails for our sins.[71] This is obviously directed against the Catholics, but the principle once stated is capable of extension to cover all teaching other than the orthodox Lutheran.[72]

By the end of the year 1525, then, the hand of the magistrate was to reach into the realm of the spirit, as Luther defined it in his treatise on the civil power. Erroneous teaching was considered an offense to be taken cognizance of by the civil courts. It is not the duty of the prince to compel belief, for that must still be free. But he must

[70] Enders, 5, p. 118 (4 Feb., 1525): "nam et hic Satan per istos prophetas sic proficit, ut jam Nurmbergae aliquot cives negent, Christum aliquid esse, negent verbum Dei aliquid, negent baptismum et sacramentum altaris, negent civilem potestatem: solum confitentur esse Deum."

[71] C. R., I, c. 765.

[72] A few years later (1530) Luther gave to the world his ripened thought in the form of a commentary on the 82nd Psalm. Blasphemy it is to teach against an article of faith well grounded in Scripture or the creeds, and universally believed. Those who, like the "Anabaptists," so teach are to be summarily dealt with by the civil power. (W. A. 311, p. 208.)

guard against false teaching. It will be noted that a clear distinction is here drawn between belief and the open voicing of that belief. The former is to be tolerated, the latter must be suppressed. Luther in his theory of repression has returned substantially to the viewpoint which he held before 1517, only the crime is now blasphemy instead of heresy.

The final step was taken when in February, 1526, Luther urged upon his prince his duty to take action for the suppression of the openly conducted Catholic ceremonies at Altenburg.[73] Two reasons he gave for this. In the first place it would be a violation of his conscience did he not put a stop to such blasphemous practices; and secondly, it is not to be tolerated by a civil magistrate that his subjects should be led by contrary preachers into division and dissension from which would come in the end sedition and riot. There must be but a single form of teaching in his domains. This letter followed a statement drawn up by Melanchthon, Brisger, and Schaubis in which they urged that the prince suppress such ceremonies, as did the Jewish kings of old.[74] One recalls the condemnation by Osiander of Pfeiffer's pamphlets on the ground that he appealed to the Mosaic law for the suppression of false prophets. Osiander then claimed that the old law had been abrogated by the coming of Christ; [75] Luther and his followers

[73] Erlangen, 53, p. 368.

[74] Enders, 5, p. 318, note.

[75] *Vide supra*, p. 45.

were themselves now ready to appeal to that law against their foes. With this *Gutachten* Luther pronounced himself in full accord.[76] Some small measure of toleration they would permit. Behind their doors these " Papists " might worship as they pleased, whom they pleased " and as many gods as they will "; [77] but there must be no open worship, else might a stumbling block be interposed to the confusion of the weak. It is the duty of the state to act in its civil capacity as the protector of the faithful.

Luther thus came in theory to the position taken, under stress of necessity, about one year earlier by the Evangelical theologians and the Council of Nuremberg. The question naturally presents itself, were Luther and his followers inconsistent? Were they false to the position which they assumed earlier in the Lutheran revolt? On first thought that question would be, and frequently has been, answered in the affirmative; and there is much evidence which may be adduced in substantiation of that viewpoint.[78] On closer view, however, the inconsistency seems to be more apparent than real. The necessity of repression was inherent in the belief, to

[76] Erlangen, 53, p. 367.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 369.

[78] Faulkner, for example, in his essay on *Luther and Toleration,* speaks of his inconsistency (p. 137 *et seq.*). In individual acts and utterances Luther was undoubtedly inconsistent, but to the great guiding principle he was never untrue. The notion of his inconsistency seems to come largely from failure to take into consideration the changing situations which lay back of his utterances.

which Luther and his followers clung, in a doctrine of exclusive salvation. So long as Luther could believe that the Word of God would conquer the hearts of men, he could demand that external authority allow the individual to choose for himself in matters of religion. When that faith was shaken he turned inevitably to authority. That some of his followers arrived at this position earlier than he need not surprise us. Weaker men who follow a great leader are not apt to be so thoroughly gripped by the power of an idea and will more quickly turn, when the battle comes, to the power of the fist. Whether Luther borrowed from his Nuremberg friends in working out a theory of repression is a question that cannot be definitely answered. Nor can we know what he would have done had he been called upon to face the problem which had to be met by the authorities at Nuremberg on January of 1525. He did, however, express satisfaction that "Christ was so strong in their midst," [79] and in the following year he quoted approvingly their example in urging his prince to assume the burden of reforming the Church in his lands.[80]

[79] Enders, 5, p. 166. [80] Erlangen, 53, p. 368.

Chapter V

TOWARDS A POLICY OF REPRESSION

The key to the understanding of the subsequent relations between the Lutherans and the sectaries is to be found in the position assumed by the territorial state in Luther's system of reform. The years immediately following 1525 form the period in which his theories relative to the combating of dissent are worked out into a practical system. Luther frequently found it necessary to justify the positions taken,[1] and hesitated often to apply the theory which he had evolved, "for the great heart of the man was always more tolerant than his head."[2] In the main, however, the princes had no such scruples. Their duty it was to maintain order and their profit to take the lead in revolt from Rome. For to the secular powers and emoluments of the prince were now added the lands of the Church and the prerogatives of the bishop. He it was who, as the first member of the Christian com-

[1] For example in his letter to Löscher, 26 Aug. 1529 (Enders, 7, p. 150), where he urges the suppression of sectaries as a state necessity. See also Erlangen, 54, p. 97, and W. A., 31 pp. 208 *et seq.*

[2] Burr, *op. cit.* p. 723.

munity, now became responsible for the souls of his subjects. To the duty of suppressing dissent, by virtue of his office as secular prince, were added more positive functions looking toward church reform, functions which partake of a more purely ecclesiastical character.[3] The change came gradually. The same forces, operative in extending his duties to the enforcement of the first as well as the second table of the Mosaic Law, operated also in placing upon him other duties of the bishop. To *jus puniendi* was added *jus reformandi*.[4]

This development in the position and prerogatives of the prince in Evangelical lands must be briefly traced. The high place assigned by Luther to the civil power has already been indicated. His respect for authority was ingrained, but the limits of that authority he had carefully defined. It was to put a stop to abuses in the ecclesiastical order, but its power was to be only that of correction and restraint. As "with a father who has lost his wits" it was to deal with the Church.[5] The reform and organization of the religious community was to be left to each individual congregation. This was the settlement forced upon Luther when, after a few years of revolt, it became clear that he could not

[3] *Cf.* Köhler, p. 27.

[4] For a discussion of the *jus reformandi* see Burkhard von Bonin, *Die praktische Bedeutung des jus reformandi.* Berlin dissertation, 1902.

[5] *Von den guten Werken* (1520), W. A., 6, p. 258. *Cf.* Burr, p. 722, note.

carry the existing system with him, and some other expedient must therefore be found. "When there is a parish which has the gospel, it not only has the right and the power, but is also bound by the pledge of its members to Christ at baptism, for their souls' salvation, to avoid, flee from, depose or withdraw from the authority wielded by the present bishop, abbot, monastery, foundation, or their like, since one sees plainly that they teach and rule contrary to God and his Word."[6] Such was Luther's method of meeting a situation made inevitable by the circumstances of his revolt. "Pope, bishops, doctors, and everyone, have the power to teach, but the flock [the Christian community] shall judge whether theirs is the voice of Christ or of a stranger."[7] A parish cannot exist without preaching and teaching, so it follows naturally enough that they must have preachers. But the present preachers are blind guides. Since the ecclesiastical hierarchy is corrupt, each congregation must choose its own pastor.[8] Luther's viewpoint is here sufficiently manifest. No authority, either ecclesiastical, for that has proved recreant to its trust, or civil, since its arm does not reach into this field,[9] has any control over the religious affairs of the Christian community. The members of this group are competent

[6] *Dass ein christliche Versammlung . . . Recht und Macht habe, alle Lehre zu urtheilen. . . .* (1523), W. A., 11, p. 411.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 409.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 411.
[9] As he argues in his pamphlet *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit.*

to judge teaching, to depose false teachers, and to choose from their midst those who should instruct them in the true Word of God.

No sooner is that statement made than it must be qualified. In case an entire community, Council and all, embrace the true faith, what function shall the Council assume as a member of the *Gemeinde?* In such a case Council and Church congregation are substantially one. The community as a whole cannot possibly act without the former. It becomes the duty of the Council, therefore, as head of the community, to take the initiative and act for it. And it is quite the same whether temporal or spiritual matters are under consideration.[10] Such a situation occurred in 1522 at Altenburg.[11] A majority of the citizens, and among them the members of the Council, had embraced the Evangelical faith. They wished, therefore, an Evangelical pastor for their church of St. Bartholomew. As the Prior of the Augustinian convent in the city was in control of this church and properly had the right of appointment of the pastor, some unusual method was necessary to accomplish their ends. The pulpit was filled by the Prior himself and his assistants. The community, therefore, under the leadership of the Council, refused to pay their tithes to him and, on the suggestion of Luther, called an Evangelical preacher, Gabriel Zwilling

[10] Müller, *Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther,* p. 50.
[11] For a discussion of this see Müller, pp. 41, 49 *et seq.*

by name, to the pastorate.[12] It is comprehensible that such action should be bitterly opposed by the Prior and Chapter. The former said that when he assumed to appoint a burgomaster for the city, the Council might properly assume the power to appoint a preacher.[13]

The opposition of the Chapter was so strong that it became necessary to call upon Elector Frederick to assist in settling the quarrel. On 8 May Luther wrote to him contending that the canons had lost their authority because they opposed the gospel, since power is not given by God for destruction, but for edification. And he makes this significant statement: "The Council of Altenburg and your Grace also are bounden to prohibit false preachers, at least to assist in or permit the installation of a true preacher."[14] Here is a case, then, in which not only the Council is to act as the head of the community, but even the prince may at need be called upon to assist in seeing that the people are enabled to secure an Evangelical preacher. But there the duty of the prince ends. It is still left for the congregation actually to choose the pas-

[12] Letter of Luther to the Burgomaster and Council of Altenburg, 6 May, 1522 (Erlangen, 53, p. 134): "Die Regelherren haben keine Oberkeit mehr, wenn sie dem Evangelio entgegen sind, sodern sind als Wölfe zu meiden und zu verlassen."

[13] Enders, 3, p. 334, note 2.

[14] Erlangen, 53, p. 135. *Cf.* letter of Hieronymus Schurf to the Elector, 9 Mar., 1522 (Enders, 3, 302), in which he urges the duty of the civil power to act in such matters.

tor.[15] In point of fact, however, the Elector overstepped these limits set by Luther. Zwilling was not satisfactory to him. He therefore refused to permit him to remain at Altenburg, after the community had called him, and secured for the place Wenceslaus Link.[16]

Other important instances there were in which this same question, or questions very similar, had to be met. But this will suffice to show the direction in which theory and practice were tending. If the Council was expected to act as head of the community, what would be the duty of the prince in case an entire state should accept the Evangelical faith? And if a prince should accept the true faith, could he conscientiously permit the "horrid blasphemy of the papal mass" to be celebrated or the equally dangerous sects to exist in his territories? Ever the vision grows more clear of a state being won to the cause of the Wittenberg reformer. In 1525 Philip of Hesse threw in his lot openly on the side of Luther; that same year Duke John became Elector of Saxony; and, most significant of all, the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, Albert of Brandenburg, accepted the Lutheran faith, secularized his domain, and thus made Prussia an Evangelical state under the suzerainty of the King of Poland. As head of the state would the prince have any ecclesiastical duty to perform or would each community still remain

[15] Müller, p. 52.
[16] *Cf.* Müller, pp. 51 *et seq.*

supreme in matters affecting the governance of its religious life?

The problems raised at Altenburg concerning the rights of patrons, whose interests so frequently clashed with those of the community, served to make evident the need of some higher authority to unify and control the growing movement of revolt from the Catholic Church. It was manifest not only that the people were sometimes prone to choose pastors of questionable orthodoxy, it was likewise clear that they were not always able, because of powerful patrons, to secure the pastors whom they wanted. Luther would sweep away the authority and revenues of such patrons when they acted openly against gospel teaching by opposing the installation of preachers of what was to him the true faith. But that was only one step toward the solution of the problem of discovering some real authority in whose hands power taken from them might be placed.

An added reason for the assumption of control over religious matters by the prince was the confiscation of church property and revenues. It is beside the point to more than mention this here; but the fact must be borne in mind that it was one of the strong inducements which influenced the princes to accept the Evangelical faith. Luther's whole theory, as enunciated in the early years of his revolt, was opposed to the possession of property by the Church. It was for the princes to see to it that Rome disgorged the wealth stolen from

Germany,[17] and what could be more natural than for the princes to take this for themselves? Then, as communities went over to the Evangelical faith, monasteries and endowments fell into the hands of the civil authorities. This confiscation of religious foundations removed accustomed support from churches, schools, and hospitals; the money was diverted into other channels. Preachers were unsupported, schools were falling into decay, confusion was everywhere. Some means must be found for bringing order out of disorder. In October of 1525 Spalatin brought the matter to the attention of his prince, Elector John. "Doctor Martin," he wrote, "considers it above all necessary that your Grace should take for yourself all the property of the Church in your principality and provide for the pastors, preachers, chaplains, and other servants of the Church therefrom."[18] The following spring Luther wrote that it was the duty of the prince to see to it that but one faith was taught in his domains.[19] Here one sees the whole theory of the territorial state-church. Church lands are to be controlled by the prince and from their revenues he is to provide for pastors whom he shall appoint, and it is to be his duty to see that they are inculcating true Evangelical doctrines.[20]

[17] *Address to the German Nobility,* Wace and Buchheim, p. 36.

[18] Letter of 1 Oct., 1525. In Kolde's *Friedrich der Weise,* p. 70. This is like the action taken by the Council at Nuremberg in March of the same year. [19] Letter of 9 Feb., 1526.

[20] It may seem that this last clause reads too much into

All this received its practical expression and became a part of Evangelical state polity at the Diet of Spires held in the summer of 1526.[21] At this Diet the Catholic and Evangelical parties were about equally divided. Sharp question arose in regard to the religious settlement. The Catholic party, headed by Archduke Ferdinand, demanded that the Edict of Worms be enforced. The states — and among these the imperial towns especially — which had accepted the new doctrines, seeing in such action the undoing of all their work, the reinstatement of episcopal jurisdiction, and the return of all confiscated property, stood as a unit against it. The hands of the Emperor were tied by foreign affairs; the Pope was in league against him. The deliberations of the Diet ended in a compromise measure. Until the calling of a free Christian council the ruler of each state was, in matters pertaining to the Edict of Worms, to "so live, rule, and conduct himself as he hoped to answer it to God and his Imperial Majesty." [22] The clause was purposely ambiguous; no other expedient could have been adopted, since the two sides were evenly matched. Each party could now read into it just

Luther's letter of 9 Feb., 1526. It is certainly implied, however, for unity of teaching meant Luther's teaching alone.

[21] Friedensburg in *Der Reichstag zu Speier, 1526,* has made the most careful study of this Diet. Some of his conclusions have been questioned by Brieger, *Der Speierer Reichstag.* The latter has been reviewed by Friedensburg in A. R. G., 1910, pp. 93 *et sqq. Cf.* also Müller, *Kirchengeschichte* II, p. 338.

[22] Walch, XXI, c. 268.

such an interpretation as it chose. This clause of the Recess made possible the continuance of Evangelical teaching and the establishment of Evangelical doctrine on a basis more firm than ever before.

One reason why action so favorable to the cause opposed to Rome was put through at this time was that earlier in the year there had been formed at Torgau a league of Lutheran states. This gave them unity and a feeling of strength which would otherwise have been impossible. The members of this league recognized it as their duty, "by virtue of their ordination by God," not only to protect their subjects from any unjust force and to see to it that these subjects were instructed in the Word of God, but they also considered themselves bound to maintain them in the true faith, protected in this against all attacks from opponents.[23] This pact was originally signed by the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse only, but on 12 June the League was joined by a number of other states, and two days later by the city of Magdeburg.[24] This last marked it as peculiarly an Evangelical league and not simply a league of princes such as

[23] [Da wir] Amts halben, darzu wir von Gott dem Allmächtigen versehen, den Unsern schuldig und pflichtig seyn, dieselbe vor unbilliger Gewalt zu schützen, auch getreue Vorsehung zu thun, damit dieselbige unsere Unterthanen nicht allein mit dem Wort Gottes weiter bewiedemt; sondern neben dem also versehen werden, dass sie darbey bleiben, und vor Gewalt der Widerwärtigen beschützt und errettet werden mögen. (Walch, XVI, c. 530.)

[24] The documents for this are in Walch, XVI.

had been common in preceding centuries. It was significant that cities and principalities were now prepared to unite for the Evangelical cause.

The wording of this document leaves little doubt as to how the Recess of Spires would be understood by the authorities in states which adhered to the cause of Luther. By them it was held to grant the right to carry out thorough-going reforms in their territories. From that August day at Spires date the territorial state churches.

Organization came swiftly. In his letter of October, 1525, Spalatin had told the Elector that Luther considered a visitation necessary.[25] Three months after the meeting of the Diet of Spires Luther himself wrote to the Elector on the subject. The letter is worth quoting at some length as it states with considerable exactness Luther's position in the matter. He wrote:

"In the first place, your worshipful Highness, almost everywhere the complaints of the pastors are beyond measure. The peasants refuse to give any more and there is such unthankfulness for God's Holy Word among the people that there can be no question that a great punishment from God is at hand. If I knew how to

[25] Spalatin to the Elector, 1 Oct., 1525, in Kolde, *Friedrich der Weise,* p. 71. This is quite contrary to Luther's standpoint in his letter (cited pp. 112 *et sqq.*) to John Frederick, July, 1524, in which he opposed such a visitation on the ground that it overstepped the authority of the prince. On 5 May, 1525, too, he wrote a letter to the Council at Danzig in which he sharply distinguished between the temporal and the spiritual powers. They must not, he said, be confused. (Erlangen, 53, p. 296.)

do it with a good conscience, I certainly should assist in bringing it about that they would have no more pastors, and let them live like swine, as indeed they do. There is no longer fear of God or discipline since the papal ban is gone; everyone does as he pleases. But because all of us, especially the magistrates, are bidden before all to care for the poor youth that are being born daily and are growing up, and to keep them in the fear of God and in good training, it is necessary that we have schools, preachers, and pastors. If the parents don't wish this, they may go to the devil. But where the youngsters remain neglected and untrained that is the fault of the magistrate, and as a result the land will be full of wild and vicious people. So not alone God's law, but our own necessity, compels us to find some remedy.

But now, since in your Grace's lands papal and ecclesiastical restraint and order have ceased and all monasteries and foundations have fallen into your Grace's hands as the supreme head, there comes with them the duty and burden of ordering such things. No one else can or should take it up. Therefore, as I talked it over fully with your Chancellor and with Nicholas von Ende, it seems necessary that your Grace, as one whom God has in such case ordained and invested with the task, command as soon as possible that your territories be visited by four persons — two to have oversight over revenues and property, two who are able to judge doctrine and character. These, by your Grace's command should regulate and care for schools and parishes as may be necessary." [26]

[26] Luther to Elector John, 22 Nov., 1526. (Erlangen, 53, pp. 386 *et seq.*)

There then follow more specific recommendations. If a city or village has means the Elector should force it to support schools and churches. If he meets with a refusal, for the sake of the youth he is to compel the performance of this duty, just as a community is bound to maintain roads, bridges and the like. The confiscated property of the monasteries might be turned to this use. "For your Grace can well imagine that there would be an evil outcry and one not easily answered, if the schools and parishes were left neglected and the nobles were to take the property of the monasteries for their own use, as people are already saying and as several are doing."

No clearer exposition of the causes which drove Luther to seek the assistance of the prince to ground some sort of organization for his church need be sought. The people are incapable, ecclesiastical rule is abolished, the property of the monasteries is being indiscriminately appropriated by the nobles, there must be some authority competent to compel the support of schools and parishes for the sake of the growing youth. The prince has a very definite responsibility for the spiritual growth of his subjects. It is for him to appoint a commission which shall not only organize external reforms but which may judge doctrine as well.

This responsibility the prince was very ready to assume. A few days later the Elector replied that he considered it the proper duty of the ruler

to take action in such matters.[27] The actual steps were taken during the years 1527 and 1528. In June of 1527 the Elector issued instructions for the visitors.[28] With the whole question of the visitation it is not necessary to deal.[29] Only in so far as it has to do with the attitude of Lutheran states toward dissent will it be discussed here. The visitors were to discover how the preachers, teachers, and chaplains were carrying on their work.[30] If any preachers were not inculcating the true Word of God, they must leave their charges and betake themselves from the principality. "For although it is not our intent to prescribe to anyone what he shall hold or believe, we will none the less, in order to guard against sedition and other offenses, recognize or tolerate no sects or schisms in our principality and lands. . . . Likewise shall the same inquisition be made by the visitors regarding the laity, since we learn that in several places divers divisions, and especially concerning the sacraments, have taken root."[31] Those thus found to be in error were to be instructed. "Those who refuse

[27] Elector to Luther, 26 Nov., 1526. (Enders, 5, p. 408.)

[28] Published in Sehling, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts,* vol. I, pp. 142–148. Also in Richter, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts. Urkunden und Regesten . . .*, I, pp. 77–82.

[29] This is discussed by Burkhardt, *Geschichte der sächsischen Kirchen und Schulvisitation,* 1524–1545. Of the underlying principles governing the relations between civil and spiritual power, the best discussion is to be found in Müller, pp. 63–80.

[30] Sehling, I, p. 143.

[31] *Ibid.,* p. 144.

Christian instruction shall be ordered by our visitors, bailiffs, tax-collectors, and every magistracy, within a reasonable time to sell their goods and leave our territories." [32]

It will be seen from the above citations that these visitors were considered as officials of the prince, that they were to make inquisition not only into the lives and teaching of the clergy but of the laity as well, and that they, or other officials, were to see to it that those who refused to conform to the recognized Evangelical teaching were to leave the territories of the Elector.

With this plan of visitation Luther was in practical agreement. In his Introduction to the *Unterricht der Visitatoren an die Pfarrherrn* [33] he says that, since all ecclesiastical power has been done away and great confusion has resulted, he has asked the Elector "as our true civil authority ordained of God" to appoint visitors. He is to do this out of "Christian love," since he "is not bound to do it as a civil ruler," for the good of the gospel and salvation of the poor Christians in his lands.[34] The prince is not commanded to teach or to rule in the spiritual realm; he is, however, bound as a civil ruler to maintain order, that division, tumult, and sedition may not arise among his subjects.[35] Luther

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

[33] Published in Sehling, I, pp. 149 *et sqq.*, in Richter, pp. 82 *et sqq.* and in W. A., 26, pp. 195 *et sqq.*

[34] W. A., 26, p. 197.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

here speaks only of tumult or sedition, which the prince is to put down. But that he had in mind more than possible attacks upon civil authority seems to be indicated by the fact that he cited the action of the Emperor Constantine when he took measures to put a stop to the Arian controversy. The Emperor then took measures to suppress an heretical sect; Luther's present counsel appears much like the old expedient against heresy brought forth under a new name.[36]

The Lutherans now had a theory whereby dissent might be crushed. They had a book which was the authoritative repository of God's Word; they had regularly appointed pastors who alone were to be allowed to preach and to teach; they had an inquisitorial process by which dissent might be hunted out; they had the powerful arm of the territorial prince whose duty it was to protect the pious and maintain purity of faith; they had punishable crimes — blasphemy and sedition — of which dissenters might be accused. The only thing which now stood between the separatists and repression as thorough-going as that of the older Church was the question of expediency.

From the authoritarian viewpoint there was need of the theory of repression thus evolved. The year 1525 had marked a significant increase in the sectarian propaganda. "After the peasants' war . . .

[36] *Cf.* Völker, p. 87. It should be noted in this connection, however, that Constantine was moved more by a desire to maintain civic order than to interfere in ecclesiastical questions.

God's Word and the gospel of Jesus Christ spread over all Germany," one reads in the *Geschichtsbücher der Wiedertäufer.*[37] And the chronicle goes on to say: "In the year 1519 Martin Luther, an Augustinian friar of Wittenberg in Saxony, began to teach and to write, as did Zwingli in Zürich in Swiss lands, against the barren abominations of the Babylonish brothel, and brought to light all its malice, drunkenness, and knavery. Like a thunderbolt they sought to strike down everything, and yet they failed to build up anything better. Rather did they turn at once to the civil power and authority (there to seek protection for the cross) and trusted more in man's aid than in God. For this reason, though in the beginning they seemed to have a heaven-sent vision, the light of real truth was again dimmed in them."[38] In 1525 rebaptism began in the Swiss cantons.[39] Immediately those who practiced it became known as a sect dangerous alike to religion and the state. They came into clash with authority, banishment followed, and these

[37] Beck, p. 10.

[38] *Ibid.,* pp. 12 *et seq.* The last sentence (p. 13) reads: "Und umb der ursach, ob es vor wol einen gueten anfang gottlicher Erscheinung und Anmuets gehabt, ist inen das licht der rechten warhait widerumb verdunkelt." *Cf.* the testimony of Sebastian Franck, *Geschichtsbibel,* p. ccccxiv. *Cf.* also Grebel to Vadian, 14 Oct., 1524, in "Vadianische Briefsammlung," *Mitteilungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte,* 3 Folge, vol. 7, p. 89: "iudicabit aequus lector e Carolostadianis libellis, quam retrogradiatur Lutherus. . . ."

[39] Beck, pp. 16, 19. *Cf.* Keller, *Gesch. der Wiedertäufer,* p. 23.

pioneers were sent wandering throughout southern and southeastern Germany. Their efforts were aided by leaders such as Denck and Hut. Everywhere they found people ready to listen to their message. The movement quickly spread through upper and central Germany — to Augsburg, the center of the "Anabaptist" activity in upper Germany, to Strassburg, where was felt the influence of Denck and Hätzer, to Nuremberg, north to Thuringia, where, through the preaching of Hut, "Anabaptism" reached its bloom period in 1526–27. Down the Rhine it went through Westphalia to the Netherlands, where the soil had been prepared by humanistic teaching and by the writings of the mystics.[40] One student of the period even goes so far as to say that at this time it was not at all clear whether Luther or the "Anabaptists" would gain the upper hand in impressing their movement upon Germany.[41]

By the year 1527 dissent had assumed seriously alarming proportions, and it looked as though some sort of organization might be formed whereby the movement would gain a certain cohesion.[42] At Augsburg in the summer of that year a number of the leaders were present at a so-called "synod." Here they seem to have discussed points of likeness

[40] Rembert, *Die "Wiedertäufer" im Herzogtum Jülich,* esp. Pt. I, Chap. 2.

[41] Müller, E., *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer,* p. 14.

[42] Keller, *Gesch. der Wiedertäufer,* pp. 35 *et sqq.*

and of difference and some plan of propaganda seems to have been formulated.[43] "Apostles" were sent to various parts of Germany to preach, teach, and convert.[44] Through the writings of some of their leaders — such as Denck, Hubmaier, Sattler, — their ideas were being quietly disseminated among the people of Germany.[45]

These writings, together with the personal propaganda, made strong appeal to the man who was seeking a way out from ecclesiastical and secular dictation in religious matters. The mingling of plans for social reform with their religious theories proved another strong attracting force. Every religious propaganda, if it is to make its appeal to the working man, must carry with it a practical program of reform rather than fine-spun dogma and philosophically worded creed. The statement of Jesus that all men should be brothers carries with it an appeal which the philosophical question regarding the nature of Christ and his relation to the God-head does not possess. This movement furnished just such an appeal. When Luther had seemed to voice like principles he carried men with him, but when he threw in his lot with authority, the common man, whose interest had been awak-

[43] Roth, *Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte,* pp. 232 *et sqq.*

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 234. *Cf.* statements of Hut and others, in Meyer, pp. 226, 248; also letter of Eck to Duke George of Saxony, in Seidemann, *Münzer,* p. 150.

[45] Keller, *Gesch. der Wiedertäufer,* pp. 37, 40.

ened and whose intellect had been fed, turned to other leaders or to no leaders at all, worshipping God in his own way.

To the believer in the sacredness of constituted authority their teachings were blasphemous, their propaganda seditious. Active measures were taken against them, especially the leaders, as soon as authorities were fully awake to the danger. As yet these measures were sporadic and occasional. At Zürich the law of 1525, threatening with banishment all those who refused to have their children baptized, was supplemented in 1526 by a mandate imposing the death penalty upon anyone who rebaptized.[46] But this sentence seemed too drastic; the neighboring cantons refused to endorse such action until January of the following year. In that month, as a warning to others, Felix Manz was put to death at Zürich for fidelity to his belief, while at the same time his friend and companion, Blaurock, was banished as an alien.[47] Later in the year (8 Sept.) concurrent action was taken by the cities of Zürich, Bern, and St. Gall. The mandate then issued jointly by the three cantons rehearsed and refuted the errors of the "Anabaptists," and prescribed penalties for maintaining their beliefs. The penalty should be made to conform to the nature of

[46] Egli, *Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zürcher Reformation in den Jahren 1519–1533*, no. 936. Mandate of 7 Mar., 1526.

[47] Füsslin (Füssli), *Beyträge zur Erläuterung der Kirchen-Reformations Geschichten des Schweitzerlandes*, IV, pp. 259–265. *Cf.* Völker, p. 95.

the offense. Those who had been led into the sect by the smooth words of the leaders were to be kindly dealt with, but the propaganda of the leaders was to be stopped by whatever means proved necessary.[48]

In Germany, for those states which upheld the Edict of Worms the question was simple. They had the advantage of a settled policy and the authority of a special edict. All who refused to subscribe to the articles of the Catholic Church were heretics and as such were to be punished.[49] Even in these states, however, special measures were taken to stamp out the sectaries. In August, 1527, Archduke Ferdinand issued an edict directed against all heretics, but especially against the "Anabaptists."[50] The same fall Duke William of Bavaria directed an edict specifically against them. All who recanted were to be beheaded, those who refused to recant were to be burned.[51] Measures only slightly less drastic were resorted to by Duke George of Saxony.[52]

Lutheran states were equally quick to perceive

[48] Simler, *Sammlung*, Vol. II, pp. 449–458.

[49] See for example the mandate of William of Bavaria. Pub. in Winter, *Baierischen Wiedertäufer*, p. 173.

[50] Beck, p. 60, note 1. *Cf.* also Bucholtz, *Geschichte der Regierung Ferdinands des Ersten*, Vol. VIII, p. 138.

[51] Letter of Eck to Duke George of Saxony, 26 Nov., 1527, pub. in Seidemann, p. 150. See also mandate of William and Ludwig of Bavaria, 15 Nov., 1527, in Winter, pp. 170 *et sqq.*

[52] Enders, 6, p. 161, note 5. Mandate of 31 Dec. in Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen*, pp. 266 *et seq.* But Duke George was more inclined to leniency than was William of Bavaria. (Wappler, *ibid.*, p. 284 *et seq.*)

the danger. Their theory of repression was complete; they had only to develop a policy. Laws directed against the sectaries came early. It has been noted above how, in regions dominated by Zwingli, legislation began in 1525. We have seen also how dissent was dealt with in Nuremberg early in the same year.[53] Wandering teachers were driven from place to place. Early in 1527 a comprehensive edict was issued by the Elector of Saxony in an attempt to check "Anabaptist" propaganda in Thuringia. By the terms of this proclamation anyone other than regularly appointed pastors, preachers, and chaplains, whose duty is the care of souls, was forbidden to preach or baptize in his home or in any other place, or to exercise any other such office. The edict was first issued for the territory surrounding Coburg, but on 31 March was extended to include all of Thuringia and Saxon Franconia.[54] It is to be noted that this mandate was directed against all irregular preaching. The so-called *Winkelprediger* were considered especially dangerous as fomenters of sedition. On the strength of the mandate four radicals were put to death at Königsberg[55] early in the summer of 1527, and later in the same year eleven — ten men and one woman — suffered a like fate.[56] In June, the in-

[53] *Vide Supra,* chap. III.

[54] Wappler, *Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* p. 3 and note 4.

[55] A little town in Saxon territory northwest of Bamberg.

[56] Wappler, *Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* p. 3 *et seq.*

structions to the visitors provided for inquisition to discover those who had been influenced by these radical leaders and prescribed the penalty for all who remained firm in their error. By the middle of the summer of the year 1527, therefore, in Luther's own land of Saxony active measures had been taken for the extirpation of radical leaders.

The cities of south Germany were likewise seeking means for overcoming the danger. Step by step they were feeling their way toward a settled policy. The Council of Strassburg had, in January of 1526, issued a mandate commanding all citizens, clerical and lay, to avoid slander and quarrels, on the ground that such things lead to blasphemy and injury to the cause of religion.[57] Later in the year special notice was taken of the interruption of a service at the Minster by an "Anabaptist" who accused Matthew Zell, the preacher, of misinterpreting Scripture.[58] On 27 July of the following year was published an ordinance warning citizens against sects and erroneous doctrines, especially those of the "Anabaptists," and forbidding the harboring of false teachers. This carried a general and rather vague admonition to the effect that any infringement of its clauses would not go unpunished.[59] In the fall one Thomas Salzmann, an

[57] Pub. in Röhrich, p. 29, dated 5 Jan., 1526.

[58] Capito to Zwingli, 11 June, 1526. (C. R., XCV, p. 624.)

[59] Pub. in Röhrich, pp. 33 *et seq.* An original copy of the mandate, printed in the form of a placard, is to be found in Cornell University Library.

artisan, was arrested on the charge of complete denial of Christ and the New Testament. He was reported to have said that Christ was a false prophet who had met a just fate on the cross. In spite of his plea for pardon on the ground of misinterpretation of the Bible he was put to death for blasphemy.[60] In general, however, it may be said that the ordinance was issued chiefly as a warning; its more drastic clauses were rarely invoked. During the year several radical leaders were banished from the city and a number of the separatists were apprehended, but no disposition to adopt more stringent measures against them was evidenced by the Council.[61]

In Augsburg the rapidly increasing numbers of "Anabaptists" and the "synod" of August, 1527, stung the Council to action. Late in August a number of sectaries were seized and examined in an attempt to discover the extent and peculiar tenets of the radical movement. Though torture was used to extort confessions the results of the examination were extremely meagre.[62] During the following month further arrests were made and among those apprehended was Hans Hut. Any who were willing to accept instruction and recant were allowed to

[60] Documents in Röhrich, p. 30.

[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 30 *et seq.* For the unsettled state of thought in Strassburg see Gerbel to Luther (Enders, 6, p. 82) and Bedrotus to Vadian (*Mitteilungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte*, 8, pp. 66 *et seq.*).

[62] Roth, *Augsburg*, I, p. 234.

go free with but light penalties; [63] those who clung to their error were banished from the city.[64] On 16 September the Council passed an ordinance requiring all to take oath not to rebaptize.[65] Some three weeks later, after inquiry as to action taken in other places,[66] the policy of the Council was made more definite by the issuance of a decree, by the terms of which any connection with the sectarian movement was punishable in life and limb or by heavy fine. Citizens were not to refuse to have their children baptized, were to avoid secret meetings of the sects, and were forbidden to afford shelter to the unauthorized preachers [Winkelprediger]. The leaders were to be expelled from the city.[67] There was, however, considerable hesitation in pushing to the limit the provisions of this order.[68] As in other Lutheran states the Council was not yet quite sure of its ground.

What is known concerning the sectaries in Nuremberg during the years 1526–1527 may be quickly told.[69] Soon after the banishment of Denck

[63] Letter of Eck to Duke George (Seidemann, p. 151.) "Die von Augsburg habent die revocierenden all auss gelassen."

[64] Roth, pp. 234 *et seq.*

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[66] Zürich Council to Augsburg, 15 Sept., 1527. (Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 1262.)

[67] The decree is published in Meyer, *Die Anfänge des Wiedertäufertums in Augsburg*, pp. 251 *et seq.*

[68] Roth, *Augsburg*, I, pp. 237 *et seq.*

[69] It is possible that the archives of Nuremberg and Bamberg might yield additional data concerning the radical movement there during these years; Soden seems to have found

and the painters Spengler wrote to his friend, Clemens Volkamer, stating that the preachers and the Council together had succeeded in halting the spread of Karlstadt's teaching. Such errors, he said, could not long maintain themselves, since they were so "clearly contrary to Scripture and the Word of God," and since "they were grounded on the subtleties of reason. . . . Here everything is going well and I have no fear that any great dispute or error will grow out of it. For the preachers and the authorities have met this disease in time, and since the preachers are opposed to it there is good hope for the laity." [70] But Spengler was too confident. Despite the appearance of quiet there is reason to believe that the sectaries were gradually gaining ground in the city.[71] In the summer of 1526 the Council found it necessary again to forbid the sale of Karlstadt's books. The books of Zwingli and the report of the disputation at Baden concerning the Eucharist were also banned. This last was due in large part to the efforts of the Swiss reformer in his attempt to win the south German cities to his cause, but it seems fair to credit it in part also to the increased activity of the sectaries from the

some material of which he makes use (*Beiträge,* esp. pp. 278 *et seq.* and 319 *et seq.*); a letter of the Council to the Margrave of Brandenburg (Nicoladoni, *Johann Bünderlin,* p. 232) mentions a number of "Urgichten"; the *Grundliche Unterrichtung* mentions several warnings against the "Anabaptists."

[70] Quoted from Barge, II, p. 243. Barge accepts Spengler's statement at face value.

[71] *Cf.* Kolde, p. 71.

southland. It is highly probable that the heightened severity of the measures adopted at Zürich and the neighboring cantons against the "Anabaptists" was driving some fugitives to Nuremberg as well as to other cities of south Germany.[72] At the same time the preachers were urged to refute these erroneous teachings and to give the citizens careful instruction in the orthodox faith. The people on their part were bidden to pay strict attention to their preachers, and not to be led astray by false teachers.[73] There had been informal gatherings at which religious subjects had been discussed; such meetings and discussions furnished excellent opportunity for the spread of a spirit of dissent and were therefore ordered discontinued.[74]

Preventive measures were insufficient to meet the issue. The result was more drastic action by the Council in August. The Behaim brothers, in whose favor the sentence of banishment had been revoked in November, 1525, were again brought before the Council on suspicion of heterodoxy. Proof to warrant further action against them could not be obtained, but so sharp a watch was kept of them that Bartel found it wise again to leave the city.[75] Two others were even less fortunate. Hans Greiffenberger, whose examination some two years previously has already been noted, and Andreas von

[72] *Cf.* Roth, *Nürnberg*, p. 256.

[73] Will, pp. 72 *et seq.*

[74] Soden, p. 273. The date of this order is by him given as 14 July.

[75] Kolde, p. 71.

Löwen, cantor at St. Sebald, were examined at this time. Both were charged with error concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist, and both were banished from the city.[76]

These instances serve to show that there were in Nuremberg the same elements of unrest as were evidenced throughout the rest of central and south Germany. The Council in its letter to Poliander had pointed to a disagreement of the ministers as a fruitful source from which doubt and error might be instilled into the minds of the laymen.[77] This was now making itself apparent and added its influence to that of the active radical propaganda. Osiander published, with an introduction, Luther's sermon *Von der Kindertauf und fremden Glauben.*[78] No better commentary is needed to show the direction in which radical thought was turning.

The history of the sectaries in Nuremberg during the next few years connects itself with the life and work of the "Anabaptist apostle," Hans Hut. Of his visit in 1524 mention has already been made.[79] It is known that he was there again some time during the winter of 1526–27. Whether he had visited the city at any time between these dates is problematical. It seems very probable, however, that he had. He was at Frankenhausen with Münzer in June of 1525, went thence to Bibra,[80] and

[76] Soden, p. 274.
[77] *Vide supra,* Chap. III, note 67.
[78] Roth, *Nürnberg,* p. 256.
[79] *Vide supra,* pp. 35 *et seq.*
[80] Meyer, p. 241.

during the Lenten season of 1526 was at Augsburg.[81] The following summer he was back in Saxony at Königsberg.[82] It is reasonable to surmise that, since Nuremberg is on the direct route, he stopped there at least once on the journey between Saxony and Augsburg. He later testified that he was well acquainted with Wolfgang Vogel, pastor at Eltersdorf, and that the latter had been with him a number of times; [83] that he was well known in Nuremberg; [84] and that Jacob Dolmann, pastor of St. Jacob's church, had been with him several times.[85] Another scrap of information that points in the same direction is to be gleaned from the testimony of Martin Weischenfelders, an "Anabaptist" from Uetzing, who on examination in March, 1527, stated that he thought Hut was a citizen of Nuremberg.[86]

Hut had been carrying on a surprisingly active and successful propaganda, during the year 1526, from Königsberg in Saxony south to Augsburg and east to Nikolsburg. He had a considerable group of followers at Altenerlangen.[87] From these he parted late in 1526 with the intention of proceeding to Nuremberg, thence to Augsburg, and returning

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 224.
[82] *Ibid.*, p. 240.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[84] *Ibid.*, p, 229.
[85] *Ibid.*, p. 230.
[86] Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen*, p. 239.
[87] It is interesting to note in this connection that one of the charges against the three painters in 1525 was that they were carrying on propaganda at Erlangen. 16 January they were "Zur Red gestellt, was sie bei dem *Swertschmid* zu erlang

to Erlangen 17 February, 1527.[88] With him were four disciples — Kilian Volkamer, Eukarius, a carpenter from Coburg, his servant Joachim, and a young man named Sebastian [89] — and together they visited Grundlach, exhorting and rebaptizing.[90] At Eltersdorf he preached and rebaptized Vogel together with two of his parishioners.[91] The Council got wind of his presence. At Grundlach he and his four followers were seized during the night and invited to betake themselves from Nuremberg territory. As they started south a warning against them was sent to Augsburg, Ulm, and Regensburg.[92]

Most important among his converts was the pastor at Eltersdorf. Vogel had been a student under Luther, had been the first Evangelical pastor at Bopfingen and had removed thence in 1524 to Eltersdorf. He had known and talked with Hut when the latter was working in Nuremberg,[93] but appar-

Gehandelt haben." (*Zum Prozess des Johann Denck und der "drei gottlosen Maler,"* p. 237.) A man called in the documents Schmidt at "Altenerlang" was implicated with other "Anabaptists" in the testimony of one Spiegel. (Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* p. 234.) If any conclusions may be drawn from the similarity of names, it may not be too bold to predicate a direct connection between Hut and the painters.

[88] Testimony of Spiegel in Wappler, *ibid.,* pp. 234 *et seq.* He did not carry out the program, however, as he reached Augsburg only in March, 1527. (See Meyer, p. 224.)

[89] Wappler, *ibid.,* pp. 245 *et seq.*

[90] Will, p. 222.

[91] Meyer, p. 230.

[92] Will, pp. 222 *et seq.*

[93] "Den Pfarrer von Eltersdorff hab er wol kennet." . . . "Der von Elterszdorff sey ettlich malen bey im zu Nuern-

ently did not arouse the suspicions of the authorities until January of the year 1527.[94] At that time the Council received a complaint concerning a pamphlet which he had written attacking the people of his former parish at Bopfingen.[95] These had returned to their earlier allegiance to the Catholic Church and had thus given occasion for this rather bitter reproof. In it he had also characterized with derisive epithets the Catholic princes who had come together for a conference at Regensburg. Because of this he was cited before the Nuremberg Council and warned to moderate his language both in preaching and in writing, else would he be severely

berg, all da er gearbait gewesen, haben mit ainander vom evangelium geredt." (Meyer, p. 243.)

[94] Soden, p. 278. Will (p. 73) says that he aroused the peasants and was attempting to raise sedition at the time of the peasants' uprising; and Roth (*Nürnberg*, p. 257) follows Will. There is probably some truth in the charge. Hut had preached sedition to the peasants at Bibra in the summer of 1525, telling them that the time was ripe for them to strike down their rulers, and Vogel may have done the same. But Will (following Müllner) tends, I think, to overstate the seditious nature of the propaganda of these leaders of the radical movement.

[95] This pamphlet — "Aym trostlicher sendbrieff und Christliche ermannung zum Evangelio an eyn Erbarn Radt und gantze gemayn zu Bopfingen" — was reprinted in 1717 as a good Evangelical tract. (Keller, *Staupitz*, p. 228, n. 2.) Will wonders that a pamphlet so thoroughly Evangelical could have come from Vogel's pen in the very year that his errors and sedition came to light. He says of it (p. 77): "Es ist ein merkwurdiges Sendschreiben von der Beständigkeit in der evangelischen Warheit an die Gemeine zu Bopfingen, und zu verwundern, das es noch so gut evangelisch abgefasst ist; da doch Vogels irrthumer und Aufruhr schon in dem Jahr ausgebrochen in welchem er diese Schreiben herausgab."

dealt with.[96] This warning seems to have passed unheeded. On 22 March he was again brought before the authorities. Soden suggests that it was on account of this same pamphlet.[97] It seems more likely, however, that the writing of the tract and the complaint which it called forth merely served to call attention to other more serious offenses.[98] The Council, communicating with Duke Casimir of Brandenburg concerning him, makes no mention of the pamphlet.[99] In this letter the Duke is advised that the pastor had been found guilty of a number of unchristian errors regarding baptism, the Eucharist, and other articles of faith. For this reason he had been cited a number of times before the Council and examined, but had each time denied such charges. Careful inquest had then been made and he was found guilty of a number of dangerous practices. He was, therefore, arrested and it was learned that he had entered with others into a "new, troublesome, unchristian league against all authorities, which they intend to root out." As a sign of such league they had adopted rebaptism. The whole affair had been kept secret since they feared that, should it become known, they would be apprehended as ring-leaders in the sedition. They said that Christ would soon return to earth and

[96] Soden, p. 278; Roth, *Nürnberg*, p. 257.

[97] Soden, p. 278.

[98] *Cf.* Ludewig, *Die Politik Nürnbergs*, p. 76.

[99] Letter of 26 Mar., 1527. Pub. in Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen*, pp. 245 *et seq.*

establish a temporal kingdom and that he would place in their hands the sword of righteousness for the destruction of all civil authorities who refused to be baptized and join their league.[100]

Vogel's crimes seemed to the Council to merit for him the extreme penalty. On the same day in which the above-mentioned letter was written he was beheaded. This sentence seems excessively harsh, but there are several considerations which render the action of the authorities at least partially comprehensible. Vogel had connected himself with the group at Altenerlangen.[101] Trials of "Anabaptists" in surrounding territories, especially at Königsberg, during the early months of 1527 had shown how far-reaching was the influence of Hut and had implicated Vogel in what seemed to be a dangerous society, destructive alike of civil and ecclesiastical authority.[102] From Hut's record during the peasants' revolt it was not difficult to arrive at such a conclusion. Wappler, in reviewing the evidence, concludes that the tenets of this group of radicals were seditious.[103] Fantastic notions were being propagated among the people. It was told how the Turk would soon enter Germany; that there would be a decisive battle in which all

[100] There follows a description of Hut and his four companions, and also the names of several subjects of the Margrave whom Vogel has implicated.

[101] Wappler, *ibid.*, p. 232.

[102] See the Urgichten in Wappler, pp. 228–258. *Cf.* also Wappler, *Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* pp. 2 *et sqq.*

[103] Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* p. 33.

the princes, nobles, and ecclesiastics would be put to the sword, while the true believers (those who joined their sect) would remain; that Christ was coming within one or two years to set up a temporal kingdom to reign with the faithful. The confessions of such of these folk as came into clash with the authorities are full of such ideas.[104] Today they would be classed as vagaries of religious fanaticism rather than as seditious utterances, but in the sixteenth century other assumptions underlay men's thinking. The medieval notion of the Antichrist and of Gog and Magog was still potent. Luther believed the Pope was Antichrist and he sometimes identified the Turks with Gog and Magog. Many instances there are, too, in his letters where he exclaims upon the times and says the end of the world must surely be at hand. The notion of a catastrophic ending of the world was then by no means confined to the radicals. Account must also be taken of the prevailing judicial procedure. Suspects were examined under torture and confessions extorted from them by leading questions.[105] It is scarcely to be wondered at that some, in fear of the strappado, were induced to testify to plots of sedition. And in the case of those who, despite torture, steadfastly affirmed that

[104] Urgichten in Wappler, *ibid.*, esp. pp. 229, 231, 235, 242, 243, 244. See, too, the statement of the Bishop of Bamberg, *ibid.*, p. 247.

[105] Instructive is the testimony of Veit and Martin Weischenfelder at their trial. The third and fourth questions asked

there was no league against the civil power, it was always an easy assumption that Satan gave strength to conceal the truth, just as Luther was sure that those who were burned went steadfastly to their death because strengthened by the prince of evil.

The Nuremberg authorities had another motive for drastic action at this time. Under judicial questioning one of the sectaries had recently testified that the decisive battle for the overthrow of existing government was to be fought in Nurem-

them were as follows: ". . . wie doch ir anschleg gewest sein, gegen der oberkeit furzunemen, dasselbig eigentlich zusagen, in welcher zeit und in welcherlei weiss? " and " wo sie doch geschutz oder anders wolten genomen haben, damit sie ir furnemen gegen den hern hetten volenden mogen. . . ." (Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* p. 241). The report of Veit's answers to these questions is in part as follows: Zum dritten *ist er etwas heftig angezogen mit der peinligkeit* (the italics are in every case mine) der anschleg halb wider die obrigkeit, aber nichts anders sagen wollen, dan das der taufer inen gesagt habe, noch anderthalb jar were auf die zukunft des Hern. Aber der Turck wurde in dem jar regiren, und so er keme, welche dan den willen des himlischen vaters theten, wurden bleiben und die fursten und die hern und alle, die den willen des himlischen vaters nit theten, zu tod schlahen. Nu ist er gefragt, welchs derselb wil sein sol des himlischen vaters. Darzu sagt er, die wider die gebot Gottes theten, die wurden erschlagen werden, und hat kein anders wollen sagen, *uber das er dreumal aufgezogen,* das hab sie der taufer gelert und geweist; sei es unrecht, so solt es Got erbarmen.

" Item ist er gefragt, warumb sie doch so heimlich mit verschlossner thur mit solicher sachen sind umbgangen. Darauf er geantwurt, sie hetten besorgt, man wurd sie alle erwurgen, so man des gewar wurde.

" Zum vierten des geschutz halben sagt er, der taufer hab ine gar von niemant kein vertrostung angezeigt, sonder het geredt, das, das er sie leret, het er von Got." (*Ibid.,* p. 242.)

The testimony of Martin was similar to that of Veit. After

berg.[106] Deeply stirred by this report the Council took measures to stamp out the propaganda of such teachers.

Such considerations may serve to explain the execution of Vogel. However much doubt may today be cast upon some of the charges brought against these overzealous religionists, and however much hesitation may be felt in postulating among them a society organized for the propagation of sedition,[107] there can be no doubt that the authorities who had to cope with the situation were convinced that a real peril impended and were honest in their conviction that strong measures of repres-

denying once that he had ever heard anything regarding any intended attack on the civil power, they started to torture him again. "Als man ine *hat anziehen wollen,* hat er gesagt und aufs hochst verneint, das ime der taufer nichts davon gesagt, das man fursten und hern zu tod schlahen, auch kein ort benant, da sie zusamenkomen solten. Darauf wolt er sterben. Er woll niemand beliegen oder sich ehr zureissen lassen." (*Ibid.,* p. 243.)

The torture of the strappado, mentioned in the passage quoted, consisted in tying the hands of the victim behind his back with a rope, the other end of which was carried over a pulley in the ceiling. By this means he was raised and lowered, the sharpness of the torture being regulated somewhat by the rapidity and jerkiness with which the operation was performed or by the attaching of weights to the victim's feet. It was one of the most effective forms of torture devised, in an age fertile in such inventions!

[106] Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* p. 247.

[107] That there was no league against the civil power, though considerable loose talking regarding it, is certainly to be inferred from Hut's statements at his various hearings at Augsburg. *Cf.* Meyer, esp. p. 227 (Urgicht of 16 Sept., 1527) "er hab den bruedern furgehalten vom aid, wa sy ain oberkait forder zu schweren in gemain stat und burgerlichen sachen,

sion were necessary.[108] The times were such that calm judgment was scarcely possible. It is regrettable, however, that in times of strife the men who are most sure that they are right seem ever ready to prove their championship of truth by the logic of the club, and so it is unfortunate that the representatives of orthodoxy, Lutheran as well as Catholic, quickly saw in this socio-religious propaganda an attack upon both Church and State and were so ready to meet it with force. For Luther's words, where he urged that the spirits should be allowed to fight it out among themselves and that God's Word must alone contend in such affairs, were still ringing in men's ears as the exe-

das got solhs nit verpoten hab, und das sy der Oberkait sollen gehorsam sein, dann etlich hetten vernaint, Christen sollen nit fechten noch in krieg ziehen, hette er inen dagegen die schrift anzaigt, das sy solhs, diweil sy under der oberkait sein wolten, zu thun schuldig wern, wie auch Christus gethan und sich under die oberkait begegen hete, wa sy aber solhs nit thun wolten, mochten sy verkauffen, was sy hetten und weck ziehen."

[108] See, for instance, the letter of the Nuremberg Council to the Margrave of Brandenburg, 23 Sept.: "Dann unnsers achtens hinter dieser verpundtnus mer schendlichs giffts, dann sich yemand vermutten mag verporgen ligt." (Nicoladoni, *Johannes Bünderlin,* p. 232.) See also sentence on Hut (6 Dec.) in Meyer, p. 253, and Eck to Duke George of Saxony (27 Nov.) in Seidemann, p. 150: "dann gar sorgklich ist Dise sect, unnd wie mein g. h. unnd seine rät erwegen, mer schadens da zu förchten, dann bey der iüngst peürischen auffrur; dann dise sect wurtselt ein in stetten: wann nun die auffrur anging, wurde die in stetten sich erheben: da wurden sy geschütz, pulver und harnisch, auch kriegs geübte knecht haben: unnd wurd das pauren volck auff dem lannd, vie vor zu fallenn: wurd es alles unnder ibersich geen, wider die geistlichkeit, fürsten und Adel."

cutioner's sword cut short the life of one who thought and taught on religious subjects other than did the authorities in whose territories he lived.

Evidence adduced at Vogel's trial pointed clearly to the existence of a considerable group of radicals in Nuremberg territory, and the fear of further evil consequences spurred the authorities to action.

Jacob Dolmann was implicated by Vogel at his trial. He was therefore brought before the Council and examined, but was able to clear himself, though special watch was kept to see that his future utterances gave no further cause for complaint.[109] Search made to ascertain the extent of the error was rewarded by the apprehension of a number of "poor peasant folk who had not themselves rebaptized but had been led astray by leaders of the sect, because of simplicity rather than that they were possessed of an evil nature or were a party to the conditions of the league."[110] These people the Council did not consider dangerous and apparently took no measures against them. That the authorities were fully alive to the situation, however, is shown by their correspondence with other south German towns during 1527 and the early part of the following year.[111]

[109] Soden, p. 278.

[110] Council to Margrave of Brandenburg, 23 Sept., 1527 (Nicoladoni, p. 232). See also Seckendorff to Margrave of Brandenburg, 13 Sept., 1527 (Nicoladoni p. 225).

[111] Ludewig, G., *Die Politik Nürnbergs im Zeitalter der Reformation,* p. 77.

When it was learned that Hut had been caught in Augsburg in September, that city was communicated with in the hope that from him some information might be elicited concerning the movement in and about Nuremberg. The testimony extracted from him was of little value. The Augsburg Council, in sending it, tried to explain the meagreness of the report on the ground that he had not told the whole truth.[112] The substance of that confession, in so far as it touched upon his relations with Nuremberg, has already been discussed.[113] It served to show how great was his activity in and about the city and confirmed the Council in its belief that everything possible should be done to root out of the "new poisonous sect of Anabaptists," both for the "honor of God" and for the "common good."[114]

Up to this point action against the sectaries in Evangelical lands was occasional and sporadic, merely a groping toward a consistent and settled

[112] Jörg, *Deutschland in der Revolutions-Periode von 1522 bis 1526,* p. 699, note. The "Urgicht" is in Meyer, pp. 229 *et sqq.*

[113] In addition to Denck he there mentioned Vogel, Dolmann, and a certain Leonhard Dorfbrunner from Nuremberg, who had become a leader of the sectaries. (Meyer, p. 230.) But the latter's activities seem not to have been connected in any way directly with the city of Nuremberg. (*Cf.* Urgicht of Dorfbrunner, Nicoladoni, pp. 205 *et sqq.*)

[114] Other hints there are of radical activity in and about Nuremberg during the year 1527. It is stated that Denck and Hätzer stopped there on their way to Augsburg after their banishment from Worms in July. (Roth, *Augsburg,* I, p. 231;

policy. The following year, 1528, will mark a notable advance toward the perfecting of the policy which was to be pursued in later years.

Kolde, p. 63, note.) But we see Zürich to Augsburg (Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 1247) where mention is made of their being in Zürich. If they went from Worms to Zürich it would seem to cast a possible doubt on their visit to Nuremberg on their way to Augsburg. A letter from Venatorius to Pirkheimer, 25 April, concerning the sectaries and their tenets serves further to indicate the activity of this group and the interest and apprehension they were arousing. (*Opera Pirkheimeri*, pp. 244 *et seq.*)

Chapter VI

DISSENT MUST BE CRUSHED

From the preceding discussion it should now be evident that, in Evangelical as well as in Catholic states, the conviction was ever deepening that dissent must be crushed out at all costs. If a milder policy was pursued in the former than in the latter, it was rather because of circumstances than because in these states divided loyalty in religious affiliation was looked upon with more friendly spirit. We have seen how, gradually under the stress of need, a theory of repression was evolved, and how tentative steps were taken looking toward a policy of state coercion — first, because these people were seditious, but also because their teaching was blasphemous, and it is the duty of the prince to maintain the first table of the Mosaic Law as zealously as the second.[1] Even were a ruler disposed to act leniently, practical necessity tended always to induce concurrent action among the various states; persecution in one state served only to drive the separatists into states where there were no drastic laws against them. Thus in general every state felt itself obliged, as a measure of protection, to devise means of combating their spread

[1] *Vide supra*, p. 117, *et sqq.*

and influence. However much a prince or town council might hesitate to apply penalties to these seemingly erratic folk no responsible authority would long tolerate with equanimity having its territory, because of leniency, made the dumping ground for all the "undesirables" from neighboring states. In nearly every case, however, the civil authorities resorted to extreme action only after milder methods in the form of warnings and instruction failed to halt the activity of the leaders. Thus the edicts at Zürich came after disputations between Zwingli and the radicals; at Strassburg action was taken after a debate with Denck seemed to have proved unavailing; at Augsburg after Urbanus Rhegius had, through pamphlets and from the pulpit, warned against the new sectaries and, for the strengthening of the faithful, refuted their tenets.[2] At Nuremberg we have seen the same method employed ever since Greiffenberger was charged with heterodox utterances in 1523. Even after comprehensive edicts had been issued against the "Anabaptists" by neighboring cities, the policy of dealing individually with such of the members of the sects as could be found was continued. In the letter to George of Brandenburg-Ansbach, in

[2] Important is his pamphlet: "Wider den newen Taufforden notwendige Warnung an alle Christgleubigen Durch die diener des Evangelii zu Augsburg." (Pub. 6 Sept., 1527.) In this he says it is the duty of the preachers to meet the wolves that are creeping in with the sword of the Holy Spirit (p. Aiii verso). But the Council soon found other means.

which the necessity of devising measures for combating the activities of the sectaries was pointed out, the Council stated that it had decided to issue a warning to the citizens in its territories. With the letter was enclosed a copy of this warning, not to indicate a policy for the Margrave to pursue, but rather out of good will and that he might have greater reason to act advisedly in the matter.[3]

This letter, written in the fall of 1527, seems to mark the beginning of concurrent action on the part of Nuremberg and Brandenburg-Ansbach in the formation of a definite policy to be pursued relative to the radicals. Within a few months there proceeded from the chancelleries of both states comprehensive and carefully drawn instructions for their pastors advising them how, in their preaching, to combat the new errors, "for whoever brings to light the fickle spirit has already more than half conquered it."[4] The Instruction of Duke George was issued 3 January, 1528;[5] that from the Council of Nuremberg is undated.[6]

[3] The letter is published by Nicoladoni, p. 232.

[4] Grundtliche Untterrichtung, p. Ev. verso.

[5] It is entitled "Ein kurtze untterricht / den Pfarherrn und Predigern / Inn meiner gnedigen Herrn der Marggraffen zu Branndenburg, etc., Fürstenthumben uñ Landen / hieniden in Francken und auff dem Gebirg verordent / wes sie das volck wider etliche verfürische lere / der widertauffer / an den Feyertägen auff der Canntzel / zum getreülichsten und besten / auss Götlicher schrifft vermanen / und unterrichten sollen." And at the end — "Beschehen am Suntag nach dem Newen Jarsstag / . . . [1528]."

[6] The full title of this pamphlet is "Grundtliche untterrich-

That both pamphlets were published at about the same time can be confidently affirmed. Some direct connection between the printed Instruction which has come down to us and the warning mentioned by the Council in the letter to the Margrave on 23 September might at first be assumed. The Instruction, however, contains an allusion to the death of Hut, which occurred early in December, 1527,[7] and cannot, therefore, have been identical with the warning issued in the fall. The one that is preserved is apparently the more comprehensive statement, conceived in an attempt to make an end finally of unauthorized propaganda. It indicates a strong disposition on the part of the Nurembergers to eradicate error by pacific means. The somewhat drastic action of 1525, and the still more summary punishment of Vogel, had not established a precedent for repression, nor had there been any comprehensive edicts, such as had gone forth from the Councils of some of the other cities, issued against the sectaries. Such measures as were adopted were defensive in character; greater care

tung /eins ebern Rats der Statt Nürmberg / Welcher gestalt / jre Pfarrher un̄ Prediger in den Stetten un̄ auff dem Land / das volck / wider etliche verfürische lere der Widertauffer / in jren predigen auss heyliger Götlicher schrifft / zum getreülichsten ermanen unnd unterrichten sollen." At the end "Gedrückt zu Nürmberg durch Jobst Gutknecht."

[7] P. D. recto. For a discussion of the date of this Unterricht, see Will, pp. 90 *et seq.* Will seems to think that the paper was written by Wenceslaus Link; and Roth, *Nürnberg* (p. 260), follows him in this.

was exercised to exclude radicals exiled from other states and cities. Especial anxiety was manifested concerning exiles from Augsburg, whence it was learned that several, driven out probably as a result of the Edict of 11 October, were intending to come to Nuremberg.[8] Finally, more careful measures were taken for the suppression of heretical books.[9] The above-mentioned Instruction was to complete the work. It contains: (1) a mention of certain warnings and injunctions previously issued by the Council relative to the "Anabaptists";[10] (2) a short warning against "Anabaptism"; (3) the true teaching regarding baptism, discussed at length with copious citations from Scripture; (4) the doctrines of the sectaries, gathered under twelve heads; (5) refutation of these doctrines.

"We have," declared the Council, "with great difficulty and labor, with great danger to life and limb, honor and possessions, freed ourselves by the grace of God from the laws of the Pope, in which he commands and forbids that which God neither commanded nor forbade. We have made ourselves sure in our consciences and now shall such igno-

[8] Roth, *Nürnberg*, p. 260. See also *Aigentliche beschreibung der handlungen, so sich mit den widerteufern zu Augsburg zugetragen und verlaufen hat.*" Ed. by Myer in Z. K. G., 17, p. 257.

[9] Roth, *Nürnberg*, p. 260.

[10] The Council contents itself with the mere mention that such warnings have been issued (p. Aii verso). Whether there were any other than those mentioned in the earlier pages of this study it has been impossible to discover.

rant, inconstant, seditious folk again set up a like tyranny over our consciences by holding infant baptism to be powerless and against Scripture?" [11] These fanatics have nothing at the root of their doctrine but pure wantonness and violence.[12] Theirs is the most horrible blasphemy.[13] The true baptism is forsaken and a baptism of the devil is put in its place, the devil is therefore their God, whom they worship and follow.[14] In their hearts is murder, robbery and sedition; they would murder all the pious and make themselves the possessors of the earth. Their leaders were those who incited the peasants to sedition and must be guarded against as the real fomenters of attack upon constituted authority.[15]

The Instruction presents, then, a bitter arraignment of the sectaries as seditious and blasphemous, but there is no hint as to the means to be employed in dealing with them in case instruction failed to meet the issue. But such a condemnation of the leaders and teachings carries with it the necessity of developing a more active policy of suppression. This question it was imperative that the Council should face definitely in the near future. On 4 January, 1528, there was promulgated an imperial mandate commanding all civil authorities and magistrates to guard more earnestly against this error of "Anabaptism"; to forbid such practices

[11] P. Diii verso.
[12] P. E recto.
[13] P. Eiii recto.
[14] P. Eiii verso.
[15] Pp. Ev recto *et seq.*

as "Anabaptists" were indulging in; to warn and instruct their subjects from the pulpits, and to proceed against those who persisted in error with such penalties as might be found necessary. If they failed in this they would jointly and severally incur high displeasure and penalties from the Emperor.[16]

The issuance of this mandate ushered in a new period in the repression of separatist activity. Definite measures against the sectaries now became a matter not only of expediency, but of obedience to the expressed commands of the Emperor. On 17 January the Elector of Saxony issued an order threatening with serious penalites ["wirklicher und ernster straff"] those who persisted in error.[17] Other states quickly promulgated like decrees, — Duke George of Saxony on 7 January,[18] Archbishop Albert of Mainz on 31 January,[19] Archduke Ferdinand on 24 February.[20] These were, in general based upon former edicts, which were now extended and in some cases made more drastic. The action which most vitally influenced decisions at Nuremberg was that taken by the Swabian League on 16 February.[21] At Augsburg the League on that

[16] Mandate pub. in Wappler, *Täuferbewegung in Thüringen,* pp. 268 *et seq.*

[17] Pub. in Wappler, *Inquisition und Ketzerprozess,* pp. 164 *et seq.*

[18] Wappler, *Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* p. 5.

[19] Mandate in Wappler, *Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* pp. 236 *et sqq.*

[20] Beck, p. 60, note 1.

[21] *Urkunden zur Geschichte des schwäbischen Bundes,* Vol.

date decreed that the sectaries were to be hunted down by armed bands — one hundred knights for each quarter — in the same way as were the peasants during the revolt of 1525. They were to be summarily put to death without process of law. Those who had recanted were to be beheaded, those who remained firm were to be burned. Women were to be drowned or burned. This decree was noticeably lacking in the quality of mercy, and against such a harsh decision the representative of Nuremberg, Volkamer, protested vigorously. The members of the Nuremberg Council were unwilling to give their consent to the forging of a weapon which in Catholic states might be turned against their own co-religionists, as had already been done, they contended, in the bishopric of Würzburg.[22] Nothing could be more simple than to capture the sheep under the appearance of hunting down the wolves. A ready means would be at hand to dispose of Evangelical preachers. In their judgment it would, therefore, be sufficient to examine separatists on one point only, that of rebaptism.[23] Such

II, pp. 316 *et seq.* Schornbaum, *Zur Politik des Markgrafen Georg von Brandenburg*, pp. 17 *et seq.*, and esp. pp. 264 *et seq.*, Will, pp. 224 *et sqq.* (excerpt from Müllner's *Annals*).

[22] Will, p. 225. See, too, the letter of Eck to Duke George of Saxony mentioned above, *op. cit.* pp. 150 *et seq.*, where is recounted the execution of heretics, Lutheran and "Anabaptist," in Catholic lands.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 225; Schornbaum, p. 265. Schornbaum has examined the manuscript documents bearing on this incident and gives a brief but apparently exact account of it.

a solution was born, not of a spirit of tolerance, but of a policy of toleration dictated by fear that the same measures taken against the sectaries might be employed against themselves. There was, however, at least on the part of some, a real conviction that the measure proposed for the consideration of the League was too severe. Those who recanted should, members of the Council insisted, suffer only light punishment, and no one should be put to death without a hearing in a court of law.[24]

In this protest Volkamer acted for the Council in close accord with the two delegates from the Duchy of Brandenburg-Ansbach, Hans von Schwarzenberg and George Volger.[25] On 4 March he was instructed to seek concurrent action on the part of other states, notably Hesse and the Palatinate, in an attempt to secure a milder policy. These attempts failed, however, to secure any abatement of the terms of the edict. The efforts of Duke George and the Council of Nuremberg were thereupon concentrated upon an attempt to get their candidate chosen as leader of the hundred knights in their quarter, and thus assure a liberal execution of the mandate. In this way they hoped to escape the danger which seemed to them to threaten the Evangelical faith; and in this plan they were successful.[26]

Though the Council of Nuremberg was not ready

[24] Will, p. 227; Schornbaum, p. 265.
[25] Schornbaum, pp. 265 *et seq.*
[26] Schornbaum, pp. 266 *et seq.*

to resort to such extreme measures as those adopted by the Swabian League, its members held no less strongly the conviction that the sectaries must be suppressed. Some few who were apprehended during the spring of 1528 were forced either to recant or to leave the territory.[27]

At the same time a church visitation, on lines similar to those marked out by the Saxon visitation, was being planned.[28] George of Brandenburg-Ansbach had discussed such a visitation with Elector John of Saxony in the fall of 1527. In the spring he was commencing active measures to make it a reality when, at the instance of Spengler, the Nurembergers proposed joint action.[29] This was agreed upon, and in June representatives of the two states met at Schwabach to discuss the question and to draw up the Articles of Visitation.[30] According to the Instructions the visitors were to concern themselves with the regulation of the lives of the clergy and with the defining and ordering of the office of preacher. Further, there was to be instruction for the clergy in the fundamentals of doctrine.[31] The visitors were to see that the abuses of "Papists" and the so-called "Evangelicals" were abolished, and were to have oversight over the installation of new pastors.[32] In other words, as in

[27] Will, pp. 223 *et seq.*; Soden, p. 319.

[28] See for this Westermayer, *Die brandenburgisch-nürnbergische Kirchenvisitation und Kirchenordnung.*

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 2 *et sqq.*

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 5 *et seq.*

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Saxony the year previously, there was to be unity of teaching and uniformity of ceremony, enforced by the agents of the civil power.[33]

At Nuremberg the competence of the Council to assume control over such matters was unquestioned. This action was entirely in line with that taken in 1525, at the time of the final break with Rome. It is the duty of the civil magistrate, stated the Council in a letter defending this visitation, before God and the world to see not only that its subjects are maintained in the Word of God and the gospel, but also to see that errors, present and to come, touching holy belief and religion, are done away. Divisions, quarrels, sedition are to be guarded against and citizens are to be protected both in body and soul. Nor has the civil authority the right to wait upon a church council or the pleasure of any other state in this matter; each state, since it has this duty laid upon it by God, must give account for itself before God.[34]

With such a theory, with an impending visitation designed to discover any irregularity in religious profession and having as one of its avowed objects

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 14.

[34] City of Nuremberg to the rulers of the Palatinate and Bavaria, 30 Oct., 1528. Pub. by Gerhard Kolde in B. B. K. G. 19, p. 278. In the letter the statement is made that each one must stand before Christ at the judgment and give account for himself, of his belief, his works, and his life. But the Council is here arguing for magistrates rather than for individuals, else how would a state have the duty of protecting its subjects in body and soul.

the securing and maintaining of uniformity, and with the ever increasing need of active measures against sectaries because of the stiffening policy of surrounding states, the Council could not now hesitate long before employing measures similar to those already in force elsewhere. This immediately raised questions regarding the penalties to be imposed. The imperial edict by implication, and the decree of the Swabian League by definite statement, demanded capital punishment for dissent. The Lutherans were not yet ready, however, to put these people to death unless it could be shown that they held tenets injurious to the state, and it was becoming increasingly clear that in many cases dissent involved questions of religion only and that there was no disposition on the part of the sectaries to deny the authority of the civil magistrate in the performance of his secular functions.

Such is the problem with which the Nurembergers were faced in the summer of 1528. In their attempt to solve it they appealed to the two great leaders of the Evangelical movement in Germany — Luther and Johann Brenz. Luther's reply forms part of a letter to Wenceslaus Link; the reply of Brenz is a document of some fifteen pages. It should be pointed out that there is no direct evidence which makes absolutely certain that these two opinions were written in response to an official request from Nuremberg, but when all the circumstances involved are considered the conclusion that

such is the case seems entirely justified.[35] Both statements were written early in July; both were directed to the same general question; both were explicit in statement — the carefully wrought-out expression of men who were weighing their words;

[35] As to Luther's letter there is some question, both as regards its date and the person to whom it was addressed (*cf.* Burr, p. 723, note 15). Recent writers, in referring to it, generally accept without comment the date as given in Enders (6, pp. 298 *et sqq.*). See, for example, Köhler, p. 25, Paulus, p. 31 (but see also p. 115, note 2); Smith and Jacobs, *Luther's Correspondence,* Vol. II, p. 446; Faulkner, p. 150; Murray, *Erasmus and Luther: Their Attitude to Toleration,* p. 267. It may be worth while, however, to state the critical points involved. In his edition of Luther's letters published in 1556, Aurifaber (II, pp. 381 *et seq.*) includes, under the date 14 July, 1528, a letter to Link. He is followed by De Wette (III, pp. 347 *et seq.*) and Enders. The letter as a whole is translated in Walch (XVII, c. 2697 *et sqq.*) and is found also in German, but without date, in Reinhard, *Beyträge zu der Historie Frankenlandes* (I, pp. 145 *et sqq.*) As printed in these collections the letter is a long one of 146 lines. There is extant no manuscript copy of it as a whole. Lines 12 to 118, or parts thereof, appear separately in the extant MSS and, when dated, carry the date 27 May, 1530. To this there is one exception. The MS used by Schütze in his edition of Luther's letters, and which the editor thought was the original, is dated *anno 1544 post Johannem Baptistam* (25 June). These lines appear also, without date, in several of the early collections of Luther's works (*Cf.* Wittenberg edition, XII, p. 211; Jena edition, VIII, p. 374). Whether or not this central portion, of which the passage of interest to us comprises lines 12 to 29, forms another and a later epistle Enders, in his critical comment, leaves undecided. But he is inclined strongly against this view by the fact that Reinhard found in the archives at Ansbach the copy from which he made his transcript, sent apparently contemporaneously with the writing for the information of Duke George. This seems, therefore, to offer independent corroboration to Aurifaber.

On the other hand Hartmann and Jäger in their *Johann*

the form of Brenz's *Bedenken* clearly implies that it was in response to an official inquiry; Luther's was in direct response to a query from Link, who was in close touch with the authorities in the city; this was the normal procedure resorted to frequently in such cases. Government action against

Brenz (Vol. I, pp. 301 *et seq.*), quote Brenz as saying that he had received from Luther, in response to a query regarding the punishment for dissent, a reply identical with lines 12 to 29 in the letter which purports to be to Link. Going over the same ground some twenty years later (1862) for the briefer life of Brenz which he contributed to the *Leben . . . . der Väter . . . . der lutherischen Kirche,* Hartmann found no reason to modify this statement (p. 108). Enders lifts this supposed letter from Hartmann and Jäger and prints it as a fragment under the caption *Luthers Bedenken an Brenz wegen der Todesstrafe der Ketzer* (7, p. 211), apparently quite unconscious of the fact that he had included the same material in the letter to Link, printed in the preceding volume.

What is the solution of the problem? The weightiest reason for rejecting the dates of the MS copies is that Luther's thought in this field had by 1530 proceeded much beyond the position taken in this letter. Since he was then ready to inflict the death penalty it is inconceivable that he could have then written as he did. As to whether the letter was written to Link or Brenz, Paulus (p. 115, note 2) dismisses summarily, as an error, the statement in Hartmann and Jäger. These latter, however, wrote from manuscript sources, some of which remain still unpublished; their testimony cannot, therefore, be ignored. But they do discuss in few pages the attitude of Brenz toward the "Anabaptists," and in so doing pay little attention to chronology. They recognize no development in his thought; they are unaware of the correct date of his *Bedenken,* thinking that it was written late in 1529 and thus bringing it into close connection with the correspondence between Brenz and Spengler on the same subject, in 1530. The supposed reply of Luther to him they embody in an analysis of his *Bedenken* and they quote him as saying, "Das ist auch meine Meinung, die Obrigkeit soll mit Bescheidenheit, und nichts aus Tyrannei handeln. . . . Es

the sectaries, recounted above, must have called forth, sooner or later, such statements, especially from Luther, and the situation in Nuremberg furnished an excellent occasion. On 12 May in a letter to Link he had written, "I have had many letters from other places also concerning the Ana-

ist besser es wird vier oder zehnmal ein unrechter Glaube geduldet, denn nur einmal ein rechter verfolgt" (p. 302. The last sentence is quoted directly from Brenz's *Bedenken*). It seems impossible that Brenz could have made such a statement at the time he wrote his *Bedenken,* for Luther argues for the banishment of "pseudo-prophets and heretics" whereas the whole tenor of Brenz's argument is that only in the case of sedition might the government banish, and then not as proceeding against a sect, but only against individuals. Any such direct correspondence between Luther and Brenz would be of extreme interest, but the authors of the life of Brenz give no hint as to where they found the letter, though they publish as appendices numerous letters either written or received by Brenz during this period. Until it is possible to follow them back to their source it is my judgment that their statement must be accepted with great reserve. They are not always accurate in their quotations; they include in the summary of Brenz's *Bedenken* material which is not found there (compare pp. 308–310 with the *Bedenken* as printed in Bidenbach). That Enders publishes the fragment as from Luther to Brenz does not seem to me to carry much weight. His only authority is Hartmann and Jäger, and he does not follow them very accurately. In his prefatory comment he says that Brenz wrote in the *Bedenken,* published in Bidenbach, that he had sought counsel from Luther and had received the reply in question. He seems to have failed to verify even that fact, since no such passage occurs in the *Bedenken* as printed. The editing of the fragment shows no such careful workmanship as was expended on the letter to Link. All things considered, I incline strongly to the judgment that the letter was written to Link in July of 1528. It is possible that, after the promulgation of the imperial mandate against the "Anabaptists" at the second Diet of Spires in 1529, Brenz wrote to Luther for his views in the matter, that Luther

baptists,"[36] a comment which indicates that Link had even then approached him on the subject. Already the arguments of Master Hans had been employed, in Evangelical as well as in Catholic lands, for the silencing of dissent. What should be the decision of the leader of the Evangelical party? It is forthcoming, on 14 July, in the following terms:

"But as to your question whether the magistrate should put to death false prophets. I am rather slow to the judgment of blood, even where it is richly deserved. For in this matter the consequences, as exemplified among the Papists and, before Christ, among the Jews, terrify me. Wherever the law provided that pseudo-prophets and heretics should be put to death, in the course of time it has come about that only the most holy prophets and innocent people were sacrificed by the authority of that very law. Relying upon this, evil magistrates have made pseudo-prophets and heretics of whomsoever they pleased. I fear the same outcome among us, if once by a single precedent it could be

sent him a copy of the letter which had previously been sent to Link, and that he could then concur in the sentiments therein expressed.

The *Bedenken* of Brenz is entitled "Ob ein weltliche Obrigkeit in göttlichen und billichen Rechten die Wiedertäufer durch Feuer oder Schwert vom Leben zum Tod richten lassen möge?" It was several times reprinted and can be found most easily perhaps in Bidenbach's *Consilia Theologica*. A MS copy, the only one known to be in existence, is in the possession of the Library of Cornell University. This MS supplies the correct date, 7 July, 1528. For a fuller discussion of this see the Bibliographical Note, pp. 203 *et seq.*

[36] Enders, 6, p. 263.

proved right to put false leaders to death, as we now see among the Papists, who, by abuse of this law, shed innocent blood for the guilty. Therefore I am not ready to consent that false teachers should be put to death. It is enough to banish them. If posterity wishes to abuse this penalty their sin will be less and they will injure only themselves."

In this letter Luther shows that he has travelled far in the direction of persecution during the three years since he answered much the same question addressed to him by Spengler. At that time he did not consider the radicals as blasphemous; unless they denied the authority of the civil magistrate, the rule to be applied is that laid down by Jesus (Matt. 18:15–17). It is a matter to be dealt with by the religious community. By 1528, however, there was no question that false teachers should be punished by the civil authorities as the leaders of the religious community, but none the less acting in their civil capacity. He still hesitated to advise the death penalty, though his reluctance was more from fear that his own followers might suffer the consequences of placing such a weapon in the hands of the government than from any religious scruple against the employment of force. There was no question in his mind that some of these people merited death; and he hesitated not at all to counsel banishment. This was little more than a means of escaping the responsibility for frankly applying the death penalty. For in an age when

banishment meant fearful privation and very probably death to people proscribed as were the sectaries, the death penalty would seem almost more humane.[37]

This letter of Luther's marks a period in the development of his thought regarding repression. It is, therefore, extremely important; but more interesting for our study is the reply of Brenz. A preacher in Swabian Halle ("Schwäbisch Hall") and recognized leader of the Lutheran movement in southern Germany, his advice was much sought by George of Brandenburg-Ansbach, and he was likewise in close touch with the situation in Nuremberg. His influence had already been exerted on the side

[37] The *beneficium emigrandi* for non-conforming minorities may seem like a considerable advance in the direction of leniency, and that is unquestionably true in the case of a minority sufficiently well established to have a safe place to which its members may migrate (*cf.* Völker, p. 234). This was not the case, however, with the sectaries of the Reformation. They were everywhere proscribed. Moreover the various states had a way of warning neighboring states against any whom they had recently banished. (Strickler, *Actensammlung* I, no. 1878; Egli, *Actensammlung*, no. 1247; Röhrich, pp. 32 *et seq.*) Luther and his followers were probably entirely honest in looking upon banishment as less drastic than the death penalty. Their point of view is clear enough; sectaries must simply conform to the true faith or betake themselves hence. (Enders, 7, pp. 150 *et seq.*) But Luther probably never allowed himself to consider the consequences of such a policy. For its results from the standpoint of the sectaries, see the pathetic letter of Denck to Œcolampadius (Keller, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer*, pp. 251 *et seq.*). The story of the wanderings and death of Sebastian Franck bears eloquent testimony to the suffering imposed by the sentence of banishment.

of moderation. During the peasant uprising he had written a pamphlet counselling leniency in dealing with revolting peasants.[38] Three years later, when he is asked for his judgment regarding the "Anabaptists" and the policy to be adopted toward them, his reply is a carefully reasoned argument in which he embodies a strong plea for kindliness and forbearance. His viewpoint is much like that of Luther, when, a few years previously, he was claiming tolerance for his own faith.

Brenz proposes to discuss the question from two points of view, and it may be well to follow his argument with some care. He first asks if Scripture warrants the view that "Anabaptists" or other heretics are to be punished by the secular authority, and then whether the imperial law gives the right to condemn them to death. Sins are of two sorts, he says, spiritual and earthly. Under the former are to be included unbelief, doubt of God, desperation, misinterpretation of Scripture (simple heresy), secret envy, covetousness — those things which appertain to God's kingdom and which are in no way injurious to the peace of the civil community. Among the earthly sins are to be included treason, murder, robbery, theft, adultery, etc., which menace the peace of the state. Now, for the punishing of these two types of sin, God has ordained two

[38] *Von Milderung der Fürsten gegen die aufrührischen Bauern,* in "Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation," Vol. III.

swords — for spiritual sins, the spiritual sword, which is the Word of God; for the sins of this world, the sword of the Emperor. Spiritual sins are so subtle, and the worldly sword so rude and carnal, that more harm than good is done by attempting to apply it against them. They are rather strengthened than weakened. The way to combat spiritual sins, which are usually bolstered up by texts from Holy Writ, is by clear argument to lay bare their falsity. So soon as the light of truth breaks in upon the lies, the prince of darkness must flee. The use of the carnal sword simply confirms heretics and unbelievers in their errors. For by using compulsion one does not remove the false basis in Scripture which they have built up, and they seem to be martyrs for the Word of God. The gospel and the Holy Scriptures alone should, therefore, be used against heresy.

Moreover, unbelievers and heretics may be just as good citizens of the state as those who hold the true faith. When they live in peace and perform the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, the civil magistrate has no right to punish them. Where Paul says the civil magistrate is a servant of God and an avenger to punish those who do evil, he means those who break the civil law, not those who are guilty of spiritual unbelief. Christ also teaches the same thing where he tells his disciples that the tares must be allowed to grow up with the wheat until the harvest (Matt. 13). When one

punishes with the worldly sword, not alone the body is killed but the soul of the unbeliever also, and all possibility of winning the erring one from unbelief and error is destroyed. They should be avoided, as Paul teaches, but they should not be put to death. The heresy of the Anabaptists has been strengthened by no one thing more than by this attempt to employ the worldly sword in the realm of the spiritual. It has simply furthered the error. What is the sense in studying the Scriptures if heretics are to be silenced by force? In such case the "executioner would be the most learned doctor."

The Mosaic Law, which is invoked for the punishment of heretics, has no longer any force. We live under another dispensation. There are many other commands of the Mosaic Law which we do not now consider binding.

Some one will say, it is true that the clergy should not punish with the worldly sword, but does the same limitation apply to the civil magistrate? Should he not administer corporal punishment to the heretic? That the temporal sword should be confined to the punishment of secular offenses has already been shown. What has it to do with unbelief or heresy? Moreover, should one grant any such power to civil magistrates, we should soon find that true believers would be punished by unbelieving rulers — a thing which happened in the case of the Arians. It would be ten times better

that error should be tolerated than that true faith should be persecuted.

It is urged further that Anabaptism is not mere heresy, but that it implies a denial of the functions of the state and thus becomes a menace to the civil authority. Anabaptists hold goods in common, refuse to swear allegiance to civil authority, and maintain that no Christian may hold office. What of that? Like charges may be brought against the monks and priests, but no one in all these centuries has ever thought to fear tumult from them on any such grounds. If one is going to fear the gatherings of these Anabaptists, then must one forbid all gatherings on market days and all church gatherings, on the ground that tumult might result? To be sure, there are evil spirits among them; let such be punished just as one would punish any evil-doers. But that is no reason for decreeing wholesale punishment for all the innocent men and women who have fallen into this error. If they refuse to take the oath of obedience to the civil magistrate and will not perform their duties as citizens, they should be treated as foreigners who have never taken the oath of citizenship. "The highest penalty that one may properly impose on such a one is this, that he be forbidden the exercise of his privileges as a citizen [bürgerliche Hantierung]; any penalty above this is tyranny, violence, and lawlessness."

Let us turn in the second place to the imperial law, which is the most important base upon which

the theory of the competence of the civil magistrate to punish Anabaptists is founded. By the provisions of this law of Honorius and Theodosius any one baptizing another, or any one who is rebaptized, makes himself liable to the penalty of death. Such a law cannot possibly apply to the present Anabaptists. In the first place it was aimed particularly at servants of the Church who rebaptized, and in the second place it must have been designed to cover some breach other than appears in the text. For Emperor Theodosius was a godly man, well versed in Scripture, and he would never have promulgated a law so palpably contrary to right and to Holy Writ. Moreover the acts of other less godly emperors impose much lighter penalties for offenses as great or even very much greater, such as apostacy. If these poor people are to be put to death, the Pope and all the clergy, who have misinterpreted other commands of Scripture, such as that regarding the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, should also be killed. Strictly, too, these people are not rebaptizers. They do not believe in infant baptism and hold that theirs is the only true baptism. This law, therefore, does not properly apply to them.

And even had it been passed against rebaptizers as such, and granting that it may apply to the present sectaries, it is the business of the civil power to act as a Christian government and not as a tyrant. And what is it but tyranny when a government

corrects, by means of the executioner's sword, poor folk who have misunderstood the Scriptures? One need fear no sedition from these people if the civil authorities act justly. It is therefore no part of the work of a magistrate to punish Anabaptists as such, when they mingle with their error no seditious tenets.[39]

Such was the remarkable document which came from the pen of Brenz in the summer of 1528. I have summarized it at considerable length because of its importance for later years. At a time when the trend of Evangelical thought had turned strongly in favor of repression of religious error by the civil authorities, Brenz threw his weight into the other side of the scale and dared to plead for tolerance. These were *arme leute* — poor folk — who in the majority of cases meant no harm. He had no patience with diversity in belief, but these people should, with thoughtfulness and kindliness, be instructed in the true faith. The state should restrict itself to suppressing sedition and open denial of its authority.

It was hardly to be expected that such ideas would find favor with the other leaders of Evangelical reform. Melanchthon (nearly two years later, it is true) complained that Brenz was too mild.[40]

[39] This qualification is, of course, important. For, despite the doubts of Brenz, most responsible heads of states had convinced themselves that sedition was one of the chief counts against these sectaries.

[40] Melanchthon to Myconius, Feb., 1530, C. R., I, no. 664.

After the action taken at the second Diet of Spires (1529) with reference to the sectaries, and influenced by the subsequent need of using stringent means for maintaining the position won by the Lutherans, Brenz himself came to other views.[41] This did not prevent his treatise from going forth into the world and teaching its quiet message of tolerance. It was put into print in the autumn of 1528, and was twice later printed in full during the sixteenth century.[42] Parts of it were used, too, by Sebastian Franck in his *Geschichtsbibel*[43] for his chapter on heretics, in which he argues against their punishment. In 1554 it was used again in a work even more notable in the history of tolerance —

41 Paulus, *Protestantismus und Toleranz,* chap. 9, esp. p. 117. Paulus is answered, though to my thinking not very successfully, by Bossert. Bossert himself states that Brenz had no tolerance for a faith that he knew was wrong. If that be true, little room is left for tolerance, for no one will deny that Brenz considered Lutheranism the only true faith. I am indebted to Professor Burr, however, for a reference showing clearly that Brenz never abandoned wholly his earlier position. In 1558, when the Protestants were prepared to condemn any and all sects the Catholics chose to specify, he still protested. "Der Herr Philippus," reported Erasmus Sarcerius to the Count of Mansfield, "letzlich auch der meinung gewesen, alle secten von den Papisten specificiret, umb verhüttunge willen der Zertrennung, zuverdammen, wo er von Brentio nicht wer abgehalten worden, welchen er auch umb Gottes willen gebetten er wollen die secten helffen verdammen. Hierauf Brentius geanthwortet, er wolle es nicht thun, und da nu solches der Herr Philippus gehöret, hatt er die sach also mit betrübtem hertzen bleiben lassen." (Hummel, *Epistolæ historico-ecclesiasticæ saeculo* XVI . . . *scriptae,* Halle, 1778).

42 Köhler, *Bibliographia Brentiana,* pp. 11, 155.

43 Published in 1531.

Sebastian Castellio's *De Haereticis, an sint persequendi.*

What effect, if any, did the advice of Luther and Brenz have upon the deliberations of the Council in Nuremberg? On 18 July a decree was passed offering amnesty to all who would recant; those who refused were to be banished forthwith.[44] This action accords with the suggestion contained in Luther's letter and was probably influenced by it.[45] Brenz's statement seems to have had less direct influence upon the action of the authorities, though the policy of moderation in the treatment of those who recanted may have been due in part at least to his influence.[46]

On the strength of the decree some twenty persons were apprehended during January of the following year, and later in the same year several

[44] Ludewig p. 78. Soden, p. 319, gives the date as 14 July. If Luther's letter is correctly dated and if the surmise that it was in response to a query from the Council holds (*vide supra,* p. 178 and note 35), that date seems impossible. Ludewig worked from the archives and is a careful student. I have therefore followed him.

[45] It is interesting to note in this connection Luther's letter to Joseph Levin Metzsch, 26 Aug., 1529, in which he discusses the proper method of dealing with dissent, and remarks "So haben die zu Nürnberg, und wir zu Wittenberg gethan." (Erlangen, 54, p. 97.)

[46] It should be noted that, though their attitude changed from time to time, the Lutherans were inclined to leniency toward those who recanted. An illustration of this is to be found in a letter from the Wittenberg theologians to Elector John Frederick, dated 24 July, 1539, regarding one Hans Müller. "Erstlich bitten wir, E k f g wolle im umb gottes willen gnad

more were arrested. Of these the majority proved amenable to instruction and were dismissed with light penalties; a few were banished.[47]

If the Council, through these various measures adopted during the year 1528, was as successful in the suppression of radical activity as some writers would have us believe, there would be nothing further to chronicle.[48] Is it not, however, possible to find at work some forces, born of the struggle of the preceding years, which might have significance for those following? Had there been no results other than to give to the world the treatise by Brenz, the fight for a fuller degree of religious liberty in Nuremberg would not have been in vain. For Brenz had clearly pointed out that there was a realm into which the arm of the state could not properly reach — a principle which had become almost totally lost to the thinking of other leaders in the movement for reform — and, what is equally significant for our present purpose, had argued that people could hold different religious beliefs and still remain good citizens. Such ideas paved the way for

erzeigen und im das leben gnediglich lassen, Andere zu besserung und bekerung zu reitzen. Denn so zugleich die bekerten und unbekerten solten getodt werden, wie im Nidderland geschicht, wurde inen zu mher verstockung dadurch ursach gegeben." They urge that he should be forced publicly to abjure his error, that he should be imprisoned for a short time, as an awful warning to others, and that he should attend regularly the Evangelical Church. (Enders, 18 pp. 35 *et sqq.*)

[47] Soden, pp. 320 *et seq.*

[48] *Cf.* Roth, *Nürnberg*, pp. 260 *et seq.*

a more liberal interpretation of the duty of the state in the realm of religion. At Nuremberg the jurists and theologians debated the question as to the proper method to be pursued in dealing with the sectaries, from July 1528 to January 1529, and the only conclusion which they then reached was that the problem was impossible of solution.[49] Who can measure the possibilities for the development of a wider tolerance, when men will admit that no conclusion can be reached regarding the suppression of a despised sect! It was the sureness that they had the only true faith, and the certainty that all dissent from that faith must be crushed out, that led to the building up of a theory, and of a practice, of persecution in Evangelical lands. Even before that policy was matured they began to hesitate. A new spirit was quietly at work among them.

[49] *Jörg*, p. 704; *cf.* Ludewig (p. 78), who says that the theologians urged that the government should punish dissenters while the jurists felt that the defensive measure of banishment was sufficient.

Chapter VII

DISSENT CANNOT BE CRUSHED

Two years after Brenz penned his opinion on the subject of dissent, Spengler wrote both to him and to Veit Dietrich, Luther's friend and secretary, complaining that there was a party in the city composed of men — respectable, not fanatics, friends of his — who held that all forms of religious belief, whether of Turks, Jews, heathen, "Anabaptists," or Catholics, should be tolerated. According to the theories of this group men should be permitted to hold what beliefs they chose and worship as they pleased, so long as they did not conspire against the government or stir up sedition.[1]

In accordance with the suggestion of Spengler to Dietrich the question of the function of government in the suppression of dissent was stressed by Luther in a commentary on the 82nd Psalm, upon which he was then at work.[2] During the interval between this and his letter of July, 1528, addressed to Link, there had taken place the second Diet of Spires, March–April, 1529. At that Diet an im-

[1] Letters in Hartmann and Jäger, *Johann Brenz,* pp. 452 *et sqq.* and W. A., 31_1, pp. 183 *et seq.* *Cf.* also Paulus, p 32 *et seq.*

[2] W. A., 31_1, p. 189.

perial mandate directed against all sectaries was favorably acted upon and given to the world. By the terms of this decree all those who refused to conform to established religion were to be summarily executed. At this Diet, too, the Evangelical estates protested against the decision of the majority to enforce the Edict of Worms; but those estates that thus protested, ostensibly in behalf of the individual conscience,[3] stated in their Protest that the article concerning the sectaries they considered in every respect proper.[4] The death penalty for dissent was now ratified by the estates of the Empire, Protestant as well as Catholic. It was at this Diet, moreover, that the princes definitely assumed the leadership in the Evangelical movement. There was nothing left for the theologians but to fall into line, whether they would or not. No direct evidence is available to show that Luther changed his theory in regard to repression as a result of the action taken at Spires. Indirect evidence, however, points in that direction. By 1528 he had come to advocate banishment for those who refused to conform, but he then protested against the death penalty. At the time the Diet was sitting, Hans Sturm, an "Anabaptist" of Zwickau, was, by the advice of Luther and other theologians, sentenced to life imprisonment as a blasphemer and

[3] Ney, *Geschichte des Reichstags zu Speyer*, pp. 284 *et seq.*

[4] *Die Appellation und Protestation der evangelischen Stände.* From "Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus," vol. V, p. 75.

leader in sedition.[5] This marks some advance toward severity in the theory of repression. But a still greater change was to take place.

The Protest at Spires placed the protesting estates in grave peril. It behooved them to see that, in so far as possible, everything that might in any way create disturbance and bring down upon them the condemnation of the Catholic states should be sternly repressed. To them the fate of a minority of discontented folk who could not be satisfied with religion as authorized by the various states, was of small consequence as compared with the vastly more important matter of maintaining their own position and independence, as well as the authorized Evangelical faith. Had there been any hesitation in proceeding to drastic measures, the desire now to mollify the Emperor and the Catholic majority would have acted as a powerful aid in stilling troubled consciences. Every consideration of policy would demand that the mandate against the sectaries be enforced. Thus toward the end of 1529 we find Luther writing to the Elector of Saxony urging against any union with the Zwinglians as "unchristian," and maintaining that no one had been more assiduous than his supporters in the repression of sectarian propaganda.[6] By the beginning of the following year he was ready to advise the death penalty for sectaries on the ground that they

[5] Wappler, *Inquisition*, p. 54.
[6] Erlangen, 54, pp. 80, 82.

were guilty both of blasphemy and of sedition.[7] A few weeks later Veit Dietrich, writing to Spengler in reply to the letter mentioned above, stated that Luther would not have the civil magistrate tolerate sectaries, whether or not they held seditious tenets. For erroneous teaching is blasphemy, and blasphemy must not be tolerated.[8]

In his commentary on the 82nd Psalm Luther defined clearly what he meant by blasphemy. Those who teach against an article of faith clearly grounded in Scripture, the creeds, or the early Fathers, and generally believed, are blasphemous. Moses commanded that blasphemers, all false teachers, be stoned. In the same way should we refuse to indulge in long disputations, but "unheard and unanswered condemn such open blasphemy."[9] The appeal to the Mosaic Law leaves little doubt as to the means which Luther would employ when necessity arose. A few pages further on he becomes more explicit where he urges that unauthorized preachers, who insist on continuing their propaganda, be turned over to "Master Hans."[10]

But Luther was attempting to turn back the

[7] Luther to Menius and Myconius (Enders, 7, p. 236). The letter is here dated in March but Wappler, *Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* p. 15, note 1, thinks it was probably written in February.

[8] Letter in Haussdorff, *Lebensbeschreibung Lazari Spenglers,* p. 192.

[9] W. A., 31_1, pp. 208 *et seq.*

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 212. The stand here taken was substantiated the

hands of time. Already a new force was being born into the world. The revolt from Rome had increased consciousness of selfhood. More and more men were coming to feel that external force was not the proper means to employ for the inculcation of Christian doctrine. The executioner's block was proving a poor substitute for the teacher's desk.

This spirit grew only gradually, but none the less steadily. It was at work among the group at Nuremberg of whom Spengler complained. It had other champions. Wolfgang Capito, amazed at the steadfastness with which the condemned sectaries met their death, questioned whether after all it was not the Holy Spirit within them which gave them such strength.[11] John Odenbach, Evangelical preacher at Moscheln in the Rhenish Palatinate, pleaded for the sectaries so effectively that the judges at Alzey refused to hear cases against them on the ground that this was a spiritual matter over which they had no jurisdiction.[12] Philip of Hesse

following year by his *placet mihi Luthero* affixed to the *Gutachten* of Melanchthon, in which the death penalty is definitely advocated. C. R. IV, c. 737 *et sqq.* The date here given is 1541, but Wappler (*Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* p. 25) has shown that it must have been written in October, 1531.

[11] In his *Apologia pro Anabaptistis,* quoted from Enders, 6, p. 264, note 3. Luther was sure they were strengthened by Satan (Enders, 6, p. 262) and the Nurembergers expressed surprise that women should so readily suffer death for their faith. (David von Watt to Vadian, 28 Jan., 1528. In "Vadianische Briefsammlung," *Mitteilungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte,* 8, p. 86.)

[12] Hege, *Die Täufer in der Kurpfalz,* pp. 52 *et sqq.* The

opposed the execution of the imperial mandate promulgated at Spires against them, insisting that lighter penalties were sufficient.[13] Where men saw two, or even three systems of faith each claiming to be the only true religion and each sparing no effort to gain the mastery, it is little wonder that they began to ask if it was worth while to put a man to death because he adhered to a belief differing on some points from that of the authorities of the state in which he happened to live. It is not meant to imply that persecution ceased about this time. On the contrary it became even more bitter, but these instances serve to show how difficult, nay, how impossible, it was to carry through a consistent policy of repression even after it was evolved.

At almost precisely the same time that Luther was writing his commentary on the 82nd Psalm, advocating stringent repression, Sebastian Franck, a pioneer in an entirely different school of thought, was penning his *Geschichtsbibel,* in which he embodied a chronicle of the heretics. The world, he says, calls one whom it does not understand a heretic.[14] And prominent in his roll of honor is the name of the Christ himself. The spirit that

title of Odenbach's booklet is *Ain Sendbrieff und Ratschlag an verordnete Richter / uber die armen gefangnen zu Altzey so man nennet Widerteuffer,* 1528. It is a notable little plea for justice for these persecuted folk.

[13] *Ordnung* of Philip of Hesse, Oct., 1531 (pub. in Wappler, *Stellung Kursachsens und Hessens,* pp. 154 *et seq.*).

[14] *Chronica, Zeytbuch und Geschychtsbibel,* edition of 1531, p. 336.

breathed through this work of Franck's was the spirit of a later age. It was the insistence upon the rights of the individual conscience in opposition to the dictates of dogmatic authority. The fight for long was an unequal one, but gradually some ground has been won. Following generations have made some attempt to understand the heretic. The lesson is a difficult one and is far from being learned, but for such measure of success as has been attained, for such measure of freedom from the dictates of authority as the individual spirit has achieved, credit in part is due to the "ultras" of the period of the Reformation — men who braved bitter persecution, accepting death rather than deny their consciences.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

This study traces the growth of a theory and the development of a policy. For the former one may go to the writings of the various leaders of the Evangelical movement; for the latter one must turn in large part to scattered official papers.

The literary materials are abundant and easily available. Complete or partial editions of the works of the leaders of the Protestant revolt are within easy reach of all. The most important single source is Luther. His writings exist in numerous collections, ranging from the little single-volume edition put out by Froben in 1518 to the great Weimar edition at present in the course of publication. The works of others of the reformers, while not so carefully edited, are still adequate. Much critical work has been done in this field and the texts, except for minor points, are trustworthy. Care must, however, be exercised in their use. They consist, for the most part, of sermons, exegetical works, pamphlets, and letters. It is necessary always to examine the circumstances under which a sermon was delivered, a pamphlet or a letter written. Failure to do this may lead to serious error in interpretation. A letter, for example, dashed off by Luther to a friend or in answer to the attack of an enemy may not always be granted the same authority as a reasoned statement in reply to a query from his prince. Literary sources are always difficult to handle; they become increasingly

so at a time of hot passion, such as the early years of the Lutheran revolt.

The documentary material is not so readily available. Much there is in various collections, but much must be culled from scattered sources; some lies still buried in archives. Very important evidence for this study has been gathered in recent years and has been published either as appendices to monographs or in separately bound volumes. This study could not have been written had it not been for such materials published by Kolde, Nicoladoni, Wappler, and others in connection with their own researches. These consist of records of court proceedings, including the depositions of sectaries, together with decrees of emperor, princes, city councils, or diets directed against them.

To arrive at any just estimate of the life, character, and work of the leaders of the radical movement is a difficult matter. Almost without exception the material which has come down to us is hostile. Some fragments favorable to them may be gathered from scattered sources — the chance admission of an enemy, their depositions at court hearings, a few pamphlets in their defense. These, taken in connection with the mass of hostile writings, make it possible to approximate a true picture. Notable among this class of materials is the *Bedenken* of Johann Brenz. This has been discussed in the text, but an interesting and unique manuscript copy should be more fully described here.

This copy is in the Cornell University Library. It is in the handwriting, not of Brenz, but of a professional scribe. A pleasing and perhaps not altogether impossible guess is that it was copied, at the time it was re-

ceived in Nuremberg, by one of the secretaries for the permanent records of that city. The date and occasion of its writing has been the subject of much speculation. Until supplied by this manuscript the earliest date known for it was that of its first printing, October, 1528. (See Köhler, *Bibliographia Brentiana.*) The manuscript is dated "1528, in siebenden tag des Heumonats" (7 July, 1528). The various conjectures as to its occasion seem now to have been set at rest. It is clearly in answer to a question of the Nurembergers, written probably by Spengler at the same time that Link sent a like query to Luther regarding the method of procedure to be adopted in reference to the sectaries. Collation of the manuscript with the printed text, as it appears in Bidenbach's *Consilia Theologica,* shows no important variations. The various reprints are listed by Köhler in his *Bibliographia Brentiana.*

The classification of the material in the bibliography is more or less arbitrary, but is, I trust, clear. A word should be said in regard to the pamphlets. It seemed like useless duplication to list separately Luther's pamphlets which were of value for this study. They may be found in his collected works and are discussed in the text.

The chronicles of the period were of little use for this study. Those that were found to have any value at all will be found listed in a separate category.

It is impossible to attempt to do any work on the Reformation without becoming well-nigh overwhelmed with literature on the subject. The list of works compiled below makes no claim to comprehensiveness. Only those which have proved in some way valuable or which seemed, because of the subject matter, to belong in such

a bibliography have been noted. Some there are which would have found no place here had it not been for an appendix containing an important letter or document.

The special study of the Lutheran revolt in its relation to the growth of religious liberty was begun by Köhler in his admirable little monograph, *Reformation und Ketzerprozess,* published in 1901. Other scholars have recognized the importance of this field and have followed his lead, none more successfully than Völker in his *Toleranz und Intoleranz im Zeitalter der Reformation.* The field has not been left entirely for German scholarship, however; careful surveys have been made by Professors Burr and Faulkner, and more recently an English scholar, R. H. Murray, has contributed a volume to the discussion.

Until comparatively recently it has been the fashion in writing of the sectaries to follow the judgment of their contemporary opponents. Keller raised his voice in strong protest late in the last century. It was special pleading, however. Only within the last three decades, and notably by Wappler, has really critical work been done on them. It now becomes possible to get at something approaching their true significance for their own and for later times.

No bibliography on this subject would be complete without reference to the valuable material which may be found in the numerous periodicals, devoted wholly or in part to the period. Not only is critical work of a high order to be found in their pages, but there are frequently to be found, also, stray bits of source material which have come to light and which are not available elsewhere. Such material, when it was of value for this study, has been listed in the bibliography.

A list of the abbreviations used in text and bibliography — except those clearly self-explanatory — is here appended.

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Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus. Ed. Kunze and Stange. Leipzig, 1904–

Comprises valuable material illustrative of Protestant thought, re-edited with notes and introductions. Confined to no special period. Twelve volumes have thus far appeared. Vol. V contains the "Protest" of the Evangelical states at Spires (1529).

REINHARD, J. P., *Beyträge zu der Historie Frankenlandes und der angränzenden Gegenden.* Bayreuth, 1760.

A miscellaneous collection of source material for the history of central Germany.

RICHTER, AEMILIUS LUDWIG, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts. Urkunden und Regesten zur Geschichte des Rechts und der Verfassung der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland.* Vol. I, Weimar, 1846.

RÖHRICH, T. W., "Zur Geschichte der strassburgischen Wiedertäufer in den Jahren 1527 bis 1543. Aus den

Vergichtbüchern und andern archivalischen Quellen." *Zeitschr. f. hist. Theologie,* Vol. XXX, 1860.

Most useful are the decrees of the Council regarding the "Anabaptists," 1526–1528.

SEHLING, E., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI Jahrhunderts.* Vols. 1–5. Leipzig, 1902–1913.

Planned to be complete in 8 volumes. Supersedes the older and much smaller collection of Richter.

STRICKLER, DR. JOH., *Actensammlung zur schweizerischen Reformationsgeschichte* (1521–32). 5 vols., Zürich, 1878–84.

Supplements the collection of Egli, covering a wider field. Vol. I covers the period from 1521 to 1528, the other four from 1528 to 1532.

STROBEL, GEORG THEODOR, *Miscellaneen literarischen Inhalts.* Nürnberg, 1778.

A miscellaneous body of material thrown together in haphazard fashion. Contains some material of value for the story of the Evangelical revolt in Nuremberg.

Urkunden zur Geschichte des schwäbischen Bundes. Ed. by K. Klüpfel. Stuttgart, 1853.

Published as volumes 14 and 31 in the *Bibliothek des litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart.* Vol. 31 covers the years 1507–1533. A register with excerpts from important documents. Valuable for the action taken by the League with reference to the "Anabaptists."

VAN BRAGHT, T. J., *A Martyrology of the Churches of Christ commonly called Baptists during the Era of the Reformation.* Tr. and ed. for the Hanserd-Knollys Society by E. B. Underhill. London, 1850.

B. *Collected Works and Correspondence of Individual Authors*

BLAURER, *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer*. Ed. by Traugott Schiess. Bd. I (1509–1538). Freiburg, 1908.

An interesting body of correspondence between the Blaurer brothers and the Evangelical reformers of south Germany. Numerous references to the "Anabaptists."

LEIB, "Kilian Leibs Briefwechsel und Diarien." Ed. by Joseph Schlecht. *Reformationsgeschichtliche Studien und Texte*, vol. 7. Münster, 1909.

A bitter arraignment of the whole Evangelical revolt and especially of the sects. Valuable as illustrating the Catholic point of view.

LUTHER, *Dr. Martin Luthers sowol in Deutscher als Lateinischer Sprache verfertigte und aus der letztern in die erstere übersetzte sämtliche Schriften*. Ed. by Johann Georg Walch. Halle, 1740–55.

An old but still useful collection of Luther's works in 24 volumes. Contains, beside his works, other documents illustrative of the Protestant revolt. Must be used with care because of errors. Largely superseded by the later editions, especially the great Weimar edition.

——*Dr. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar, 1883.

The definitive edition of Luther's works.

——*Dr. Martin Luthers Briefe, Sendschreiben und Bedenken*. Ed. by De Wette and Seidemann. Berlin, 1825–56.

LUTHER (*continued*), *Dr. Martin Luthers Briefwechsel.* Ed. with notes by Enders, Kawerau, Flemming, and Albrecht. Frankfurt a.M., Calw and Stuttgart, 1884–1923.

The best edition of Luther's letters. Well edited, with copious critical and explanatory notes. It must be supplemented, however, by the Erlangen edition, as the letters in German there published are not included.

——*Dr. Martin Luthers vermischte deutsche Schriften.* Ed. by J. K. Irmischer. Vols. 53 to 56 of the Erlangen edition of Luther's works. Frankfurt a.M. and Erlangen, 1853.

Useful as a supplement to the Latin letters in Enders. Care in their use is necessary, however, as they are often misdated.

——*The Three Primary Works of Dr. Martin Luther.* Ed. and tr. by Wace and Buchheim. London, 1883.

——*Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters.* Vol. I (including letters from 1507–1521) tr. and ed. by Preserved Smith. Vol. II (letters from 1521–1530) by Smith and Jacobs. Philadelphia, 1913 and 1918.

MELANCHTHON, PHILIPP, *Opera.* Ed. by Bretschneider and Bindseil, 1834–60.

Letters as well as sermons, pamphlets, and exegetical works. His letters furnish the chief matter of interest for this study. Some inaccuracies occur, especially in the matter of dating.

PIRKHEIMER, *Opera.* Ed. by Goldast. Frankfurt, 1610.

One folio volume of the works of Pirkheimer. Valuable for the letters which it contains.

PLANITZ, HANS VON DER, *Berichte aus dem Reichsregiment in Nürnberg, 1521–1523.* Leipzig, 1899.

Interesting body of letters from the representative of the Elector of Saxony at the Diet.

RHEGIUS, URBANUS, *D. Urbani Regii, . . . Bücher und Schriften.* Frankfurt am Mayn, 1577.

SCHEURL, *Christoph Scheurl's Briefbuch.* Ed. by Soden and Knaake. Potsdam, 1872.

Vol. II comprises letters of the period from 1517 to 1540. Contains some few letters of value for the study of the sectaries. Scheurl was for long Secretary to the Council of Nuremberg, but his letters are not so important as one might expect.

VADIAN (JOACHIM VON WATT), *Briefsammlung.* Ed. by Arbenz (Emil) in *Mitt. zur vaterländischen Geschichte herausgegeben vom historischen Verein in St. Gallen,* 3 Folge. Vols. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10a. 1890–1913.

An important body of correspondence for the history of the Swiss Reformation; a few letters of direct value for this study.

ZWINGLI, *Opera Omnia.* Ed. by Schuler and Schulthess. 8 vols. Zürich, 1830–1842.

The first two volumes comprise his German works; vols. 7 and 8 his letters. Useful chiefly for the letters.

——*Sämtliche Werke.* Ed. by Egli, Finsler, Köhler. Berlin, 1904–.

A much needed edition of Zwingli's works now in course of publication.

——*Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli.* Ed. by S. M. Jackson. Philadelphia, 1901.

A convenient translation of a few of Zwingli's works. Contains his *Refutation of the Tricks of the Catabaptists* (1527).

C. *Books and Pamphlets*

" Aigentliche beschreibung der handlungen, so sich mit den widerteufern zu Augspurg zugetragen und verlaufen hat." Ed. by Chr. Meyer under the caption " Wiedertäufer in Schwaben " in *Z. K. G.*, 17, pp. 248 *et sqq.*

Of considerable value for the life of Hut and contains some direct references to the " Anabaptists " in Nuremberg.

Brenz, Johann, " Ob ein weltliche Obrigkeit in göttlichen und billichen Rechten die Wiedertäufer durch Feuer oder Schwert vom Leben zum Tod richten lassen möge," in Bidenbach, *Consilia Theologica.* 1612.

A manuscript copy of the same opinion is in Cornell University Library. See p. 203 for description.

——" Von Milderung der Fürsten gegen die aufrührischen Bauern," in *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation.* Vol. III. Leipzig, 1909.

Interesting in this connection as showing Brenz's tolerant point of view.

" Brüderlich Vereinigung etzlicher Kinder Gottes, sieben Artikel betreffend. Item ein Sendbrief Michael Sattlers an eine Gemeine Gottes samt seinem Martyrium (1527)." Ed. by Walter Köhler in *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation.* Vol. II, Pt. 3, Leipzig, 1908.

These are the " Seven Articles of Schlatten am Rand " drawn up by a group of " Anabaptists "

in 1527. Important for a knowledge of the tenets of one group, at least, of the sectaries. Written apparently by Michael Sattler.

BULLINGER, HEINRICH, *Der Widertoufferen ursprung, fürgang, secten, wäsen,* etc. Zürich, 1561.

A history of the "Anabaptists" by one of the leaders of the Swiss revolt. Like all the contemporary histories of the sectaries it must be used with caution, though Bullinger tries to be fair. More important for the period subsequent to that of this study.

DENCK, HANS, *Von der wahren Liebe.* Elkhart, Indiana, 1888.

One of the few extant pamphlets from the pen of Denck.

Ein gehapter Ratschlag Lucipers des fürsten der finsternüss mit seinen amptleüten und miterben der ewigen verdamnüss. 1529.

A rare "Anabaptist" satire. Purports to be the report to Lucifer of the minions whom he has sent to stir up dissension among his foes at Spires. Depicts his joy upon learning that Luther and his followers are now the foes of the "Anabaptists." (A copy in Cornell University Library.)

Ein Göttlich unnd grundtlich offenbarung von den warhafftigen widerteuffern: mit Göttlicher warhait angezaigt. MDXXVII.

Another rare pamphlet, attributed by Uhlhorn (*Urbanus Rhegius,* p. 123) to Langenmantel. Defends the sectaries against the charge of "Anabaptism." Apologetic but not polemic, it is a fair statement of the position of the sectaries, appar-

ently with the hope of stemming the tide of persecution. (The copy consulted by me is in the British Museum.)

Ein kurtze untterricht / den Pfarherrn und Predigern . . . / wes sie das volck wider etliche verfürische lere / der widertauffer . . . vermanen / und unterrichten sollen. Suntag nach dem neuen Jarsstag (3 Jan.), 1528.

ENDERS, LUDWIG, "Aus dem Kampf der Schwärmer gegen Luther: drei Flugschriften (1524, 1525)." In *Flugschriften aus der Reformationszeit, X. Halle,* 1893.

Reprints, with careful introductions, three pamphlets of the years 1524–25.

FRANCK, SEBASTIAN, *Chronica, Zeytbuch und Geschychtsbibel.* Strassburg, 1531.

A substantial volume of highest value for the study of the sects. Franck was an individualist. He stood aloof from all parties, but he was sympathetic with the sectaries and like them was hounded by the authorities. He was their one really favorable contemporary critic.

Grundtliche untterrichtung / eins erbern Rats der Statt Nürmberg / Welcher gestalt / jre Pfarrher uñ / Prediger in den Stetten uñ auff dem Land / das volck / wider etliche verfürische lere der Widertauffer / in jren predigen auss heyliger Götlicher schrifft / zum getreülichstē ermanen unnd unterrichten sollen. Gedrückt zu Nürmberg durch Jobst Gutknecht. (Jan., 1528.)

Handlung eynes Ersamenn weysen Rats zu Nürnberg mit iren Predicantten newlich geschehen. MDXXV.

A report of the final break of Nuremberg with the Catholic Church.

ICKELSCHAMER, VALENTINUS, " Clag etlicher brüder: an alle Christen von der grossen ungerechtickeyt und Tirannei, so Endressen Bodensteyn von Carolstat yetzo von Luther zu Wittenbergk geschicht." 1525. Pub. by Enders in *Aus dem Kampf der Schwärmer gegen Luther.*

A bitter arraignment of the Lutheran movement, by a follower of Karlstadt.

MENIUS, JUSTUS, " Der Widerteuffer lere und geheimnis aus heiliger Schrifft widerlegt durch Justus Menius." MDXXX. Published in Vol. II of the Wittenberg edition of Luther's works (1551).

Written at the suggestion of Luther to expose the " Anabaptist " movement and to furnish arguments to combat it. The volume of Luther's collected works in which it is found contains other pamphlets directed against the " Anabaptists."

MÜNZER, THOS., " Hoch verursachte Schutzrede und antwwort wider das Gaistlosse Sanfft lebende fleysch zu Wittenberg, welches mit verkärter weysse, durch den Diepstal der heiligen schrift die erbermdliche Christenheit, also gätz jämerlichen besudelt hat." 1524. Pub. by Enders in *Aus dem Kampf der Schwärmer gegen Luther.*

A violent attack upon Luther.

ODENBACH, JOHANN, *Ain Sendbrieff und Ratschlag an verordnete Richter über die armen gefangnen zu Altzey so man nennet Widerteuffer.* 1528.

A notable plea for forbearance addressed by a Lutheran pastor at Moscheln in the Rhenish Palati-

nate to the judges of Alzey. One of the very few contemporary pamphlets in defense of the sectaries.

PIRKHEIMER, CHARITAS, *Der hochberühmten Charitas Pirkheimer, Aebtissin von S. Clara zu Nürnberg, Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Reformationszeitalter.* Ed. by C. Höfler. Bamberg, 1852.

Interesting as representing the attitude of an orthodox Catholic toward the Evangelical revolt in Nuremberg. A good corrective of the extreme Protestant viewpoint.

RHEGIUS, URBANUS, *Wider den neuen Taufforden / Notwendige Warnung an alle Christgleubigen Durch die diener des Evangelii zu Augsburg.* 1528.

A good statement of the Lutheran position.

D. *Chronicles*

Die Geschichtsbücher der Wiedertäufer in Oesterreich-Ungarn. Ed. by Dr. Joseph Beck. In *Fontes Rerum Austriacarum,* vol. XLIII, Vienna, 1883.

The first few pages cover the period of this study.

" Die Wiedertäufer in Mähren." Ed. by Gregor Wolný in *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen,* vol. V, 1850.

KESSLER, *Johannes Kesslers Sabbata. Chronik der Jahre 1523–1539.* Ed. by Dr. Ernst Goetzinger in *Mitt. zur vaterländischen Geschichte herausgegeben vom hist. Verein in St. Gallen,* vols. 5–10. St. Gallen, 1866–8.

OTTIUS, JOH., *Annales Anabaptistici.* Basel, 1772.

Scarcely gets under way before 1530, but of some value.

SLEIDAN, *A famous chronicle of oure time, called Sleidanes Commentaries.* Eng. trans. by John Daws. 1560.

II LATER WORKS

ACTON, J. E. F. D., *The History of Freedom and Other Essays.* London, 1907.

Essays II and V, "history of freedom in Christianity" and "Protestant theory of persecution," are interesting discussions of the subject from the pen of a Catholic scholar.

——*Lectures on Modern History.* London, 1906.

ALBRECHT, OTTO, "Beiträge zum Verständnis des Briefwechsels Luthers im Jahre 1524," in *Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte — Festschrift für Köstlin.* Gotha, 1896.

ARNOLD, GOTTFRIED, *Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-Historie, vom Anfang des Neuen Testaments bis auf das Jahr Christi 1688.* 3 vols. Vol. I. Schaffhausen, 1740.

Valuable in the present connection for the writings of Münzer and Denck, which are to be found in Vol. I, Bk. II. Most important is Denck's *Widerruf.*

BARGE, HERMANN, *Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt.* 2 vols. Leipzig, 1905.

The standard life of Karlstadt.

BEARD, CHARLES, *The Reformation of the 16th Century in its Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge.* London, 1883.

BONIN, BURKHARD VON, *Die praktische Bedeutung des ius reformandi.* Stuttgart, 1902.

BOSSERT, GUSTAV, "Johann Brenz, 'der Reformator

Württembergs' und seine Toleranzideen," in *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte.* Stuttgart, 1911–12.

Brandenburg, Erich, *Martin Luthers Anschauung vom Staate und der Gesellschaft.* In *Schr. V. R. G.* Halle, 1901.

Brieger, Theodore, *Der Speierer Reichstag von 1526 und die religiöse Frage der Zeit.* Leipzig, 1909.

Insists, in opposition to Friedensburg, that the Recess gave to the princes the right to carry out religious innovations.

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Burkhardt, C. A. H., *Geschichte der sächsischen Kirchen- und Schulvisitationen von 1524 bis 1545.* Leipzig, 1879.

Burr, G. L., "Anent the Middle Ages." *American Historical Review,* vol. XVIII, July, 1913.

A brilliant survey of the Middle Ages. Its value for this study lies chiefly in the acute summary of Luther's views on tolerance.

Burrage, Henry S., *A History of the Anabaptists in Switzerland.* Philadelphia, 1882.

Sympathetically inclined toward the sectaries.

Cornelius, C. A., *Geschichte des münsterischen Aufruhrs.* Leipzig, 1855.

Written by a Catholic scholar who saw no good in the "Anabaptists," and who was fully convinced that they were the offspring of Luther. Of little present value.

Drews, P., *Wilibald Pirkheimers Stellung zur Reformation.* Leipzig, 1887.

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Has been superseded by later works.

FAULKNER, J. A., "Luther and Toleration." In *Papers of the American Society of Church History.* 2nd Series. Vol. IV. New York and London, 1914.

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FRIEDENSBURG, WALTER, *Der Reichstag zu Speier, 1526.* Berlin, 1887.

——"Der Speierer Reichstagsabschied von 1526 und die religiöse Frage." *A. R. G.*, vol. 7 (1909).

FÜSSLIN (or Füssli), JOHANN CONRAD, *Beyträge zur Erläuterung der Kirchen-Reformations Geschichten des Schweitzerlandes.* 5 vols. Zürich, 1741–1753.

Contains much original material embedded in its pages.

GERBERT, CAMILL, *Geschichte der Strassburger Sektenbewegung zur Zeit der Reformation, 1524–1534.* Strassburg, 1889.

GRISAR, HARTMANN, *Luther.* 3 vols. Freiburg i.B., 1911.

One of the latest and most scholarly of the lives of Luther. From the pen of a Catholic scholar, it is hostile toward Luther and sees in his movement no forward step in the growth of religious liberty.

HAGEN, KARL, *Deutschlands literarische und religiöse Verhältnisse im Reformationszeitalter — mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Wilibald Pirkheimer.* 3 vols. 2nd ed. Frankfurt a.M., 1868.

An acute study of the cultural life of Germany in

the 16th century. Furnishes an excellent background.

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Of value especially because of letters which are included in the footnotes.

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HEGLER, A., *Geist und Schrift bei Sebastian Franck*. Freiburg i.B., 1892.

A careful analysis of an exceedingly interesting character.

——*Sebastian Francks lateinische Paraphrase der deutschen Theologie und seine holländisch erhaltenen Traktate*. Tübingen, 1901.

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——"Zu Luthers Gedanken über Idealgemeinden und weltliche Obrigkeit." *Z. K. G.,* vol. 29, pp. 267–322, 1908.

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The standard work from the Protestant viewpoint. Left unfinished at the author's death.

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——*Spiritual Reformers in the 16th and 17th Centuries.* London, 1914.

These two books, from the pen of a man who is spiritually much akin to the men of whom he writes, furnish a good background in English for the present study.

JÖRG, JOS. EDMUND, *Deutschland in der Revolutions-Periode von 1522 bis 1526.* Freiburg i.B., 1851.

Inaccurate, but of some value because dealing especially with the situation in central Germany.

KELLER, LUDWIG, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer*. Leipzig, 1882.

Denck is Keller's hero. Letters and documentary material of importance are appended. Especially important is Denck's letter to Œcolampadius, Oct., 1527.

——*Die Anfänge der Reformation und die Ketzerschulen. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Waldenser beim Beginn der Reformation.* Berlin, 1897.

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——*Johann von Staupitz und die Anfänge der Reformation.* Leipzig, 1888.

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——*Die Reformation und die älteren Reformparteien in ihren Zusammenhange.* Leipzig, 1885.

Since writing his first book on the "Anabaptists" in 1880 Keller has been their most consistent and able champion. An archivist himself, he has based his work largely upon careful archival studies. His championing of the "Anabaptists," and his attempt to connect them with earlier reforming sects, has led him into sharp conflict with Lutheran historians, and has tended to give his work something of the character of special pleading. To him, however, we owe the beginning of the fair-minded study of the sects of the Reformation.

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An important letter from the Nuremberg Council to the rulers of Bavaria and the Palatinate regarding the church visitation of 1528.

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Prints an important letter from Spalatin to Elector John, Oct., 1525.

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A little monograph based upon researches in the Nuremberg archives, and very well done. Especially valuable for its footnotes, where are printed excerpts from the sources, and for its appendices.

——"Uber das Kirchenwesen in Nürnberg im Jahre 1525." *B. B. K. G.,* vol. 19, pp. 57–74.

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MEYER, CHR., "Die Anfänge des Wiedertäufertums in Augsburg." In *Zeitschr. d. hist. Vereins f. Schwaben u. Neuburg,* I, 211–253. 1878.

The best study of Hans Hut. Appends documents of much importance for the history of the sects in central Germany.

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Chiefly valuable for excerpts from the sources.

MÜLLER, ERNST, *Geschichte der bernischen Täufer.* Frauenfeld, 1895.

MÜLLER, KARL, *Kirche, Gemeinde und Obrigkeit nach Luther.* Tübingen, 1910.

Best survey of an important question.

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Of little critical value.

NEY, JULIUS, *Geschichte des Reichstags zu Speier im Jahre 1529, mit einem Anhange ungedruckter Akten und Briefe.* Hamburg, 1880.

NICOLADONI, ALEXANDER, *Johannes Bünderlin von Linz und die oberösterreichischen Täufergemeinden in den Jahren 1525–1531.* Berlin, 1893.

Pages 160–301 consist of important source materials, culled from various archives, regarding the "Anabaptists."

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——*The Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance.* London and New York, 1893.

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